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AN

THE
LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE
OF
GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

VOL. II.



THE
L I F E

OF

GOVERNEUR MORRIS,

WITH

SELECTIONS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE

AND

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS.

DETAILING EVENTS IN THE AMERICAN REVOLU-
TION, THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, AND IN
THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE
UNITED STATES.

BY JARED SPARKS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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CONTENTS

OF THE

SECOND VOLUME.

	PAGE.
I. CORRESPONDENCE, OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE, RESPECTING A NEGOTIATION WITH THE BRITISH MINISTRY. - - - -	1
II. CORRESPONDENCE, OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE, CONCERNING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, AND THE AFFAIRS OF FRANCE. - - -	57
III. LETTERS AND MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS RELATING TO FRENCH AFFAIRS. - - -	461
1. Observations on Government, applicable to the Political State of France. -	464
2. Note addressed to the Queen of France, on the Course to be pursued by the King.	472
3. Plan of a Campaign for France, submitted to General Lafayette. - - - -	473
4. Note written for the Count de Montmorin, containing Suggestions respecting a Change of Government. - - - -	485
5. Letter to the Count de Montmorin, on the State of Public Affairs. - - -	487
6. Note communicated to the Count de Montmorin. - - - - -	489

	PAGE.
7. Speech composed for the King of France, with some Observations on the Constitu- tion. - - - - -	490
8. Memoir written for the King of France, re- specting the New Constitution. -	512
9. Letter to Count de Montmorin, on providing Subsistance for Paris. - - -	525
10. Letter to the King of France. - -	527
11. Draft of a Manifesto to be made by the King of France, late Monsieur. - -	530

CORRESPONDENCE,
OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE,
RESPECTING A NEGOTIATION WITH THE
BRITISH MINISTRY.

CORRESPONDENCE,
RESPECTING A NEGOTIATION WITH THE
BRITISH MINISTRY.

GEORGE WASHINGTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

New-York, 13th October, 1789.

Sir,

It being important to both countries, that the treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States should be observed and performed with perfect and mutual good faith, and that a treaty of commerce should be concluded by them, on principles of reciprocal advantage to both, I wish to be ascertained of the sentiments and intentions of the Court of London on these interesting subjects.

It appears to me most expedient to have these inquiries made informally, by a private agent; and understanding that you will soon be in London, I desire you in that capacity, and on the authority and credit of this letter, to converse with his Britannic Majesty's Ministers on these points, viz. whether there be any and what objections to performing those articles in the treaty, which remain to be performed on his part; and whether they incline to a treaty of commerce with the United States on any and what terms?

This communication ought regularly to be made to you by

the secretary of state, but that office not being at present filled, my desire of avoiding delays induces me to make it under my own hand. It is my wish to promote harmony and mutual satisfaction between the two countries; and it would give me great pleasure to find that the result of your agency, in the business now committed to you, will conduce to that end.

I am, Sir, Your most obedient humble servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

GEORGE WASHINGTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

New-York, October 13th, 1789.

Sir,

My letter to you, herewith enclosed, will give you the credence necessary to enable you to do the business, which it commits to your management, and which I am persuaded you will readily undertake.

Your inquiries will commence by observing, that, as the present constitution of government and of the courts established in pursuance of it, removes the objections heretofore made to putting the United States in possession of their frontier posts, it is natural to expect from the assurances of his Majesty and the national good faith, that no unnecessary delays will take place. Proceed then to press a speedy performance of the treaty, respecting that object.

Remind them of the article by which it was agreed, that negroes belonging to our citizens should not be carried away, and of the reasonableness of making compensation for them. Learn with precision, if possible, what they mean to do on this head.

The commerce between the two countries you well understand. You are apprized of the sentiments and feelings of the United States on the present state of it, and you doubtless have heard, that in the late session of Congress, a very respectable number of both houses were inclined to a discrimination of duties unfavorable to Britain, and that it would have taken place,

but for conciliatory considerations, and the probability that the late change in our government and circumstances would lead to more satisfactory arrangements.

Request to be informed, therefore, whether they contemplate a treaty of commerce with the United States, and on what principles or terms in general. In treating this subject, let it be strongly impressed on your mind, that the privilege of carrying our productions in our vessels to their islands, and of bringing in return the productions of those islands to our own ports and markets, is regarded here as of the highest importance; and you will be careful not to countenance any idea of our dispensing with it in a treaty. Ascertain, if possible, their views on this point; for it would not be expedient to commence negotiations without previously having good reasons to expect a satisfactory termination of them.

It may also be well for you to take a proper occasion of remarking, that their omitting to send a minister here, when the United States sent one to London, did not make an agreeable impression on this country; and request to know what would be their future conduct on similar occasions.

It is in my opinion very important, that we avoid errors in our system of policy respecting Great Britain, and this can only be done by forming a right judgment of their disposition and views. Hence you will perceive how interesting it is, that you obtain the information in question, and that the business be so managed, as that it may receive every advantage, which abilities, address, and delicacy can promise and afford.

I am, Sir, Your most obedient humble servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, 22d January, 1790.

Sir,

I received from Major Hosgill, who arrived here on the twenty first instant, the two letters which you did me the honor to

write upon the thirteenth of October. I shall, in consequence, set off for London as soon as I possibly can. When last in that city, I saw the Duke of Leeds twice at the French Ambassador's, and from some slight circumstances was induced to believe, that the British court are better disposed towards a connexion with the United States, than they were some eighteen months ago. The principal difficulty will, I imagine, arise from the personal character of the King, which is that of perseverance, and from the personal dislike, which he bears to his former subjects. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Froome's Hotel, Covent Garden, 28th of March, 1790.

Mr Morris had the honor to wait upon his Grace, the Duke of Leeds, this morning, but had not that of seeing him. He presents his most respectful compliments, and will be happy to know the time when it will be most convenient for his Grace to receive certain communications, which Mr Morris is directed to make to his Majesty's ministers, by the President of the United States of America.

DUKE OF LEEDS TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Whitehall, March 28th, 1790.

The Duke of Leeds presents his compliments to Mr Morris, and will be glad to see him at the office tomorrow, at half past two.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

London April 7th, 1790.

Sir,

I arrived in this city on Saturday evening, the twenty-seventh of March, and called the next morning on the Duke

of Leeds, minister of foreign affairs. He was not at home ; I therefore wrote to him a note, a copy whereof is enclosed, as also his answer received that evening. On Monday, the twenty-ninth, I waited upon him at Whitehall, and after the usual compliments presented your letter, telling him that it would explain the nature of my business. Having read it, he said with much warmth and gladness in his appearance, 'I am very happy, Mr Morris, to see this letter, and under the President's own hand. I assure you it is very much my wish to cultivate a friendly and commercial intercourse between the two countries ; *and more*, I can answer for that of his Majesty's servants, that they are of the same opinion.' 'I am happy, my Lord, to find that such sentiments prevail, for we are too near neighbors not to be either good friends or dangerous enemies.' 'You are perfectly right, sir ; and certainly it is to be desired as well for our mutual interests, as for the peace and happiness of mankind, that we should be upon the *best* footing.'

I assured him of our sincere disposition to be upon good terms, and then proceeded to mention those points in the treaty of peace, which remained to be performed ; and first, I observed that, by the Constitution of the United States, which he had certainly read, all obstacles to the recovery of British debts are removed, and that if any doubts could have remained, they are now done away by the organization of a federal court, which has cognizance of causes arising under the treaty. He said he was happy to receive this information ; that he had been of opinion, and had written to Mr Adams, that the articles ought to be performed in the order in which they stood in the treaty. Not choosing to enter into any discussion of his conduct in relation to Mr Adams, I told his Grace that I had one rule or principle for public and private life, in conformity to which I had always entertained the idea, that it would consist most with the dignity of the United States, first, to perform *all their* stipulations, and then to require such performance from others ; and that in effect, if each party were on mutual covenants to suspend its compliance, expecting that of the

other, all treaties would be illusory. He agreed in this sentiment. Upon which I added, that the United States had now placed themselves in the situation just mentioned.

And here I took occasion to observe that the Southern States, which had been much blamed in this country for obstructing the recovery of British debts, were not liable to all the severity of censure, which had been thrown upon them. That their negroes having been taken or seduced away, and the payment for those negroes having been stipulated by treaty, they had formed a reliance on such payment for the discharge of debts contracted with British merchants, both previously and subsequently to the war. That the suspension of this resource had occasioned a deficiency of means, so that their conduct had been dictated by an overruling necessity.

Returning then to the main business, I observed that as we had now fully performed our part, it was proper to mention that two articles remained to be fulfilled by them, viz. that which related to the posts, and that regarding a compensation for the negroes ; unless indeed they had sent out orders respecting the former, subsequent to the writing of your letter ; and I took the liberty to consider *that* as a very probable circumstance. He now became a little embarrassed, and told me that he could not exactly say how that matter stood. That as to the affair of the negroes, he had long wished to have it brought up, and to have something done, but something or other had always interfered. He then changed the conversation ; but I brought it back, and he changed it again. Hence it was apparent that he could go no farther than general professions and assurances.

I then told him that there was a little circumstance, which had operated very disagreeably upon the feelings of America. Here he interrupted me. ‘I know what you are going to say—our not sending a minister—I wished to send you one, but then I wished to have a man every way equal to the task, a man of abilities, and one agreeable to the people of America ; but it was difficult. It is a great way off, and many object on that score.’ I expressed my persuasion, that this country could not want men well qualified for every office ; and he

again changed the conversation. Wherefore, as it was not worth while to discuss the winds and the weather, I observed that he might probably choose to consider the matter a little, and to read again the treaty, and compare it with the American Constitution. He said that he should, and wished me to leave your letter, which he would have copied, and return it to me. I did so, telling him that I should be very glad to have a speedy answer, and he promised that I should.

Thus, sir, this matter was begun; but nine days have since elapsed, and I have heard nothing farther from the Duke of Leeds. It is true that Easter holidays have intervened, and that public business is in general suspended during that period. I shall give them sufficient time to show whether they are as well disposed as he has declared, and then give him a hint. Before I saw him I communicated to the French Ambassador, *in confidence*, that you had directed me to call for a performance of the treaty. He told me at once that they would not give up the posts. Perhaps he may be right. I thought it best to make such communication, because the thing itself cannot remain a secret; and by mentioning it to him we are enabled to say with truth, that in every step relating to the treaty of peace we have acted confidentially in regard to our ally. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

London, 13th April, 1790.

Dear Sir,

My letter of the seventh will have communicated what passed with the Duke of Leeds respecting the business you committed to me. I take the liberty to mention here, that from his countenance and manner on the perusal of your letter, he seemed to derive from it that sort of pleasure, which a man feels at the removal of something, which every now and then brings to his mind disagreeable ideas. I do not exactly see

from what cause this emotion was produced. By the eagerness of his subsequent expressions, I conjectured that the critical situation of Europe had excited some disquietude respecting the part, which the United States might take in case of a general war. What strengthened that idea, and perhaps led me to form it, was that in a chamber to which I was introduced previous to the audience, there was a large book of maps open at that part of Poland. But the silence since observed leads to a suspicion, that his satisfaction was derived from another source. I am told that in a late debate the ministers committed themselves by throwing out in pretty clear terms the idea, that some sort of treaty was on the carpet with America. And if so, the opening now given must have relieved them from the fear of future contradiction.

I trouble you, my dear sir, with all this conjecture, because it is not impossible that circumstances may turn up on your side of the water, with which it may be useful to compare minutely what passes here. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

London, 13th April, 1790.

Sir,

This will accompany the duplicate of what I had the honor to write on the seventh by the packet. I am still waiting for intelligence from the Ministers, who (to judge by appearances) slumber profoundly upon the application made to them. Yesterday the two houses of Parliament again entered on business, after their recess for the Easter holidays; and Mr Pitt has announced the budget for next Monday. Some rational conjectures, as to their dispositions and intentions, may perhaps be formed from the business of that day. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

DUKE OF LEEDS TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Whitehall, April 28th, 1790.

Sir,

I should not have so long delayed returning an answer to the letter you received from General Washington, which you had the goodness to communicate to me last month, had I not heard you were in Holland. I received some time ago a note from you, which I should soon have acknowledged, but was at first prevented by a multiplicity of engagements, and since by illness.

The two subjects contained in General Washington's letter are indisputably of the highest importance, and I can safely assure you, that it has ever been the sincere and earnest wish of this country to fulfil her engagements (contracted by the treaty of peace) with the United States, in a manner consistent with the most scrupulous fidelity.

We cannot but lament every circumstance, which can have delayed the accomplishment of those engagements, (comprised in the treaty) to which those States were in the most solemn manner bound; and, should the delay in fulfilling them have rendered their final completion impracticable, we have no scruple in declaring our object is, to retard the fulfilling such subsequent parts of the treaty as depend entirely upon Great Britain, until redress is granted to our subjects upon the specific points of the treaty itself, or a fair and just compensation obtained for the non-performance of those engagements on the part of the United States.

With respect to a commercial treaty between the two countries, I can only say, that it is the sincere wish of the British government to cultivate a real and *bonâ fide* system of friendly intercourse with the United States; and that every measure, which can tend really and reciprocally to produce that object, will be adopted with the utmost satisfaction by Great Britain.

I am, Sir, Your most obedient humble servant,

LEEDS.

TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Covent Garden, 29th April, 1790.

My Lord,

When I had the honor of an interview with your Grace at Whitehall, on Monday, the twenty-ninth of last month, I left, at your request, a letter from the President of the United States to me, which you promised to return after you should have had it copied. As your Grace seemed to be particularly pleased with the contents of that letter, I took the liberty to request that I might be speedily honored with the communication of your sentiments on the subjects of it. This you were so kind as to promise. Your subsequent silence led me to apprehend, that this affair might have been overlooked in the attention to matters of more apparent moment. I took the liberty therefore to recall it to your Grace's recollection by a note of the nineteenth instant, which was delivered at Whitehall, and to which no reply has been received.

Permit me now, my Lord, to request that the President's letter may be returned, and excuse me for expressing at the same time a wish, that you would enable me to transmit the evidence of those friendly dispositions towards America, which you were pleased to express. It flows from the sincere desire that more perfect harmony may be established between the two countries, and a solicitude to obviate unpleasant circumstances. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Covent Garden, 30th April, 1790.

My Lord,

I was honored by your Grace's letter of the twenty-eighth late last evening, and take the earliest opportunity to acknowledge it. Be assured, my Lord, that I regret much the indis-

position which suspended your answer, and sincerely wish that it may be speedily removed.

I am happy to be assured by such respectable authority, that it has ever been the sincere and earnest wish of this country to fulfil her engagements with the United States in a manner consistent 'with the most scrupulous fidelity.' This indeed has never admitted of a question in my mind, because I would not harbor a doubt of the national faith of Great Britain; and I have the pleasure to observe to you, my Lord, that sentiments of this kind induced the Congress at their last session to reject, by a considerable majority, some regulations which might have appeared hostile, and proved injurious to your commercial interests. I am perfectly convinced from this, and from many other circumstances, that the United States have a constant determination to perform in the fullest manner every stipulation which they have made; for this is not only in itself a moral duty peculiarly binding upon every sovereign power, but it is specially secured by that constitutional compact, which the people of America have made with each other. Since both parties therefore have the best dispositions, and are influenced by the purest motives, I indulge, my Lord, the hope, that every obstacle to a complete performance will be speedily removed. And in this hope, without going into an inquiry as to the causes of former delay, which might not perhaps tend towards conciliation, I must entreat of your Grace's goodness to be informed in what respect, and to what degree, you consider the final completion of those engagements, to which the United States were bound, as having been rendered impracticable; for I must own that the idea is new to my conception.

The candor, with which your Grace avows the intention to retard a fulfilment of such parts of the treaty as depend upon Great Britain, meets, as it merits, my utmost acknowledgment. I am very far from questioning the policy, nor will I presume to doubt the propriety, of a caution which is, I trust, unnecessary, and which might indeed be unpleasant to the feelings of

Americans, if they could be affected with punctilious sentiments in the discussion of national interests. But it becomes my duty to ask of you, my Lord, the nature and extent of the redress expected for the subjects of his Britannic Majesty, upon the specific points of the treaty; and, in the supposed case that this should have become impracticable, the kind and the measure of compensation to be required from us, as preliminary to the fulfilment of those stipulations which remain to be performed by you.

I trust that I am mistaken in that part of your Grace's letter, which relates to a commercial treaty, because it really appears to me as expressive only of the wish to cultivate merely an amicable intercourse, founded on commercial good faith, and as implying some disinclination to the securing of that intercourse by the force of treaty. I should be very unhappy to convey a false interpretation of the sentiments of this government upon an object of such importance. This might be prejudicial to both countries, and therefore I shall indulge the expectation that, if I am wrong, your Grace will have the goodness to set me right. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

London, May 1st, 1790.

Sir,

Herewith I have the honor to transmit a duplicate of my last letter of the thirteenth of April. Not having heard from the Duke of Leeds I wrote him a note on the nineteenth. To this I received no reply; wherefore, on the twenty-ninth, I addressed him again by a letter of which a copy is enclosed. This was delivered at his office, Whitehall, between eleven and twelve in the morning of the twenty-ninth, and at half past ten in the evening the letters were sent to me. You will observe, that his letter is dated the 28th, and of course takes no notice of that to which it is in fact the answer; but the style and gen-

eral complexion, as well as the circumstances attending the delivery of it, clearly show that it was not written until the evening of the twenty-ninth.

I might in reply have made some strictures upon the information that I was in Holland, &c. &c. I might also have contrasted the expressions of good faith with the conduct of the administration, and have observed upon the idea that the *United States* were bound in the most *solemn* manner, while from the subsequent parts of his letter it would seem that Great Britain is not bound at all, or at most but loosely. There is also a confusion of language, which resembles the stammering of one, who endeavors to excuse a misdeed, which he resolves to commit. Thus on the supposition that completion of the treaty by us is impossible, he insists that we shall complete it, or make compensation. The expressions in the last clause are, if possible, more vague than all the rest, and the reply might have been proportionately more pointed.

My letter of yesterday contains nothing of what is just stated, although perhaps it ought to have noticed some parts. I must rely on your kindness, sir, both to interpret favorably what I have done, and to excuse my omissions. I thought it best to heap coals of fire on their heads, and thereby either bring them into our views, or put them most eminently in the wrong. It was moreover my wish to draw forth specific propositions, because these will admit of discussion, or else, if manifestly unjust, they may not only be repelled, but they will serve to show a predetermined breach of faith by them, which will justify whatever conduct we may afterwards find it proper to adopt. If, as is not improbable, they should give us no answer, or one so vague as to mean nothing, I shall pursue, according to circumstances, my object of compelling them to speak plainly, or refuse absolutely.

It seems pretty clear, that they wish to evade a commercial treaty, but not peremptorily to reject it; and, therefore, I have construed into rejection his Grace's abstruse language, leaving him the option to give it a different interpretation. I do not

expect that he will, though he may perhaps write an explanatory comment, more unintelligible than the text.

I have some reason to believe, that the present administration intend to keep the posts and withhold payment for the negroes. If so, they will color their breach of faith by the best pretexts in their power. I incline to think also, that they consider a treaty of commerce with America as being absolutely unnecessary, and that they are persuaded they shall derive all the benefit from our trade without treaty. It is true that we might lay them under restrictions in our ports, but they believe that an attempt of that sort would be considered by one part of America as calculated by the other for private emolument, and not for the general good. The merchants here look on it as almost impossible for us to do without them; and it must be acknowledged that past experience, and the present situation of neighboring countries, go far to justify that opinion. Whether the ministers shall act according to their own ideas, or consult mercantile people, they will equally, I think, repel advances from us; and, therefore, it seems more prudent to lay the foundations of future advantage, than attempt to grasp at present benefit. I will not pretend to suggest any measures for the adoption of congress, whose wisdom and whose sense of national honor will certainly lead them to act properly, when the proper moment shall present itself. It will naturally strike every mind, that while the legislature of this country continues to invest the executive authority with great power respecting the American commerce, the administration here will have advantages in treaty, which can only be balanced by similar confidence on the part of congress, in the executive of America.

But very much will, I think, depend upon the situation of France. If appearances there should change, and so much vigor be infused into the government as would enable it to call forth the national efforts in support of their interest and honor, a great revolution would be produced in the opinions here. From the conduct of the aristocratic hierarchy in the low countries, who are instigated and supported by Prussia, I have long

been thoroughly convinced that the alternative of war, or the most ignominious terms of peace, would be proposed to the imperial courts. Counting upon the absolute nullity of France, and supposing that this country can at any moment intimidate that into abject submission, Prussia and Poland will, I think, join themselves to Turkey and Sweden against Russia and Austria, which are both exhausted, and one of them dismembered. Probably the war will be commenced before this letter reaches your hands, and then Britain and Holland are to be the umpires, or rather dictators, of peace.

I have taken the liberty to touch thus far upon the general system of European politics, as it may tend to show that for the present, Great Britain will rather keep things in suspense with us, being herself in a state of suspense as to others. I will not go into conjectures about the events, which will take place upon the continent. They will, I believe, as is usual, disappoint the projectors; but be that as it may, our affairs can derive no advantages now from what shall happen hereafter. I presume that a dissolution of parliament will take place shortly, although many of the best informed people think, or at least say they think, otherwise. But it is clear to my mind, that the administration will wish to have before them a prospect of seven years' stability to their system, be that what it may, and they will not at the moment of a general election expose themselves to criticism by any act of doubtful construction. This forms with them an additional reason for being evasive in regard to us. Perhaps there never was a moment in which this country felt herself greater, and consequently it is the most unfavorable moment to obtain advantageous terms from her in any bargain. But this appearance is extremely fallacious. Their revenue is not yet equal to their expenditure; money is indeed poured in upon them from all quarters, because of the distracted situation of affairs among their neighbors, and hence their stocks have risen greatly since the peace, so that they can borrow at an interest of four per cent; but supposing they should not be obliged to engage in the war, still there are two events, either of which would

overturn the fabric of their prosperity. If France establishes a solid system of finance, then capitalists will prefer five per cent with her, to four per cent from Britain; for, all other things being equal, there is no shadow of comparison between the resources of the two countries. If France commits a bankruptcy, the disorders consequent thereon will doubtless be violent, but the storm once passed, she would be able to make greater exertions by her annual resources, than Britain could compass by every possible anticipation of credit. There is a middle situation between sinking and swimming, in which the French finances may flounder on for some time to come, but even this state of wretchedness will produce rather evil than good to Great Britain; for she has already reaped all the harvest, which could be gathered from the distress of her neighbors, and must necessarily lose the benefits of the famous commercial treaty, in proportion as the resources of her customer are cut off.

Under the various contingencies, which present themselves to my contemplation, and there are many which I will not trouble you with the perusal of, it appears clearly, that the favorable moment for us to treat is not yet come. It is indeed the moment for this country, and they seem determined to let it pass away. I must again entreat your indulgence, sir, for this long and desultory letter. Accept, I pray you, the assurances of that respect with which I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

London, May 2d, 1790.

Dear Sir,

You will find enclosed the copy of what I took the liberty to trouble you with on the thirteenth of last month. On Saturday, the seventeenth, I dined in company with Mr Fox. The state of French politics formed, of course, a large part of the conversation. The situation of other countries was then pass-

ed in review, and it became a question how far Britain might be engaged in the affairs of the continent. At length I took an opportunity to ask what system the administration had adopted respecting America. He told me that he could not tell, but he believed they had none, and would in all probability be governed by events. That he did not believe Mr Pitt would trouble his head about the matter, but would probably leave it to Lord Hawkesbury and Mr Grenville, who are both of them indisposed to us; whereas Pitt himself is, he supposes, rather friendly than otherwise. Mr Fox said further, that he and Burke are now almost alone in their opinion, that we should be permitted to trade in our own bottoms to their islands, and that this opinion loses ground daily; though for his own part he persists in it.

I find that the ministers apply for information respecting America, and particularly American commerce, to a Mr Irvin, who long resided in America, and is now in the customs; a mighty sour sort of creature, and one who seems to have a mortal aversion for us. I met him at dinner one day, and he took pains to let me know, that he was doing all he could to prevent any encouragement from being given to our exports, by the corn bill, which is now on the carpet. He declared that he would, by the force of starvation, oblige the people of Britain to raise corn enough for their own consumption, and that even the supply of the West India Islands ought to be provided in this country.

You will readily perceive, sir, from this rude sketch of influential characters, that there is but little disposition for treating with us at present. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

London, 29th May, 1790.

Sir,

I do myself the honor to inclose a copy of my letter of the first instant. On the night of the fourth there was a hot press here, which has continued ever since, and the declared object is to compel Spain to atone for an insult offered to Great Britain, by capturing two vessels in Nootka Sound. Permit me to mention, incidentally, that it would not be amiss for the American captain, who was a witness of the whole transaction, to publish a faithful narrative.

The general opinion here is, that Spain will submit, and that Spain only is the object of this armament. But I hold a very different faith. If Spain submits, she may as well give up her American dominions; for the position advanced here is, that nations have a right to take possession of any territory unoccupied. Now, without noticing the inconsistency between this assertion, and those which preceded the war of 1755, when France built Fort du Quesne upon ground unoccupied by British subjects, it cannot escape the most cursory observation, that the British, sitting down in the vicinity of Spanish settlements, will establish such a system of contraband traffic as must ruin the commerce of Cadiz, and the revenue now derived from it by the Spanish monarch.

In former letters I have communicated in some measure my ideas upon the second opinion. I shall not therefore recapitulate them, but only in general notice, that the armament against Spain, should Spain shrink from the contest, will undoubtedly be sent to the Baltic, with decisive effect. You will observe also that the ministers count upon the nullity of France, of which I shall say a word presently.

In consequence of the orders for impressing seamen, a number of Americans were taken, and the applications made for their relief were in some instances ineffectual. On the morning of the twelfth, Mr Cutting called to inform me, that he was

appointed agent to several of the American masters of ships. I gave him my advice as to the best mode of proceeding, and particularly urged him to authenticate all the facts by affidavits, assuring him that if he was unsuccessful, I would endeavor to obtain the assistance of such persons as I might be acquainted with. On the seventeenth, Mr Paine called to tell me, that he had conversed on the same subject with Mr Burke, who had asked him if there was any minister, consul, or other agent of the United States, who could properly make application to the government, to which he had replied in the negative; but said, that I was here, who had been a member of Congress, and was therefore the fittest person to step forward. In consequence of what passed thereupon between them, he urged me to take the matter up, which I promised to do. On the eighteenth I wrote to the Duke of Leeds, requesting an interview. He desired me to come at three o'clock the next day; but his note was delivered after the hour was passed, and very shortly after it, came another note, giving me an appointment for the twentieth.

Upon entering his closet he apologized for not answering my letters. I told him that I had in my turn an apology to make for troubling him with an affair, on which I was not authorized to speak. He said I had misunderstood one part of his letter to me, for that he certainly meant to express a willingness to enter into a treaty of commerce. I replied, that as to my letter I supposed he would answer it at his leisure, and therefore we would wave the discussion. That my present object was to mention the conduct of their press-gangs, who had taken many American seamen, and had entered American vessels with as little ceremony as those belonging to Britain. 'I believe, my Lord, this is the only instance in which we are not treated as aliens.' He acknowledged that it was wrong, and would speak to Lord Chatham on the subject. I told him that many disagreeable circumstances had already happened, and that there was reason to expect many more, in a general impress through the British

dominions. That masters of vessels, on their return to America, would excite much heat; ‘and *that*, my Lord, combined with other circumstances, may perhaps occasion very disagreeable events.’

He then repeated his assurances of good will, and expressed an anxious wish to prevent all disagreement; observing at the same time, that there was much difficulty in distinguishing seamen of the two countries. I acknowledged the inconveniences to which they might be subjected by the presence of British seamen to be Americans, and wished therefore that some plan might be adopted, which, founded on good faith, might at the same time prevent the concealment of British sailors, and protect the Americans from insult. As a means of accomplishing that end, I suggested the idea of certificates of citizenship to be given by the admiralty courts in America to our seamen. He seemed much pleased, and willing at once to adopt it; but I desired him to consult first the King’s servants in that particular department; and having again reminded him that I spoke without authority, took my leave; but at his request, promised to visit him again the next day.

The morning of the twenty-first I found him sitting with Mr Pitt, to whom he presented me. The first point we took up was that of the impress. Mr Pitt expressed his approbation of the plan I had proposed to the Duke, but observed that it was liable to abuse, notwithstanding every precaution which the admiralty offices in America could take. I acknowledged that it was, but observed, that even setting aside the great political interests of both countries, it was for the commercial interest of Britain rather to wink at such abuse; for that if they should be involved in a war *with the House of Bourbon*, our commerce with Britain must be in American bottoms; because a war premium of insurance would give a decided preference to the manufacturers of other countries in our markets; but that no wages would induce American seamen to come within the British dominions, if they were thereby

liable to be impressed. Mr Pitt replied to this, that the degree of risk, and consequently the rate of insurance, must depend upon *the kind of war*. Not taking any direct notice of this expression, I observed, that notwithstanding the wretched state of the *French Government*, there still existed much force in that country, and that the power of commanding human labor must also exist somewhere ; so that if the government would not arm their fleets, there would still be many privateers, and that in effect, the slenderest naval efforts must involve merchant vessels in considerable danger.

Returning then to the consideration of the principal point, we discussed the means of carrying the plan with effect, and for that purpose I recommended that his majesty's servants should order all their marine officers to admit as evidence of being American seamen, the certificate to that effect of the admiralty in America, containing in it a proper description of the person, &c. ; but without excluding, however, other evidence ; and observed, that, in consequence of the communication, if such orders were given, the executive authority in America, without the aid of the legislature, by directions to the several admiralties, might carry the plan into effect, so far as relates to those seamen who should apply for certificates. I am induced to believe that this measure, if adopted, will not only answer the desired end, but be productive of other good consequences in America, which I will not now trouble you with the detail of.

This affair being so far adjusted, we proceeded to new matters, and they both assured me that I had misapprehended the Duke's letter in regard to a treaty of commerce. I answered coolly, that it was very easy to rectify the mistake, but it appeared idle to form a new treaty until the parties should be thoroughly satisfied with that already existing. Mr Pitt then took up the conversation and said, that the delay of compliance on our part had rendered that compliance less effectual, and that cases must certainly exist where great injury had been sustained by the delay. To this I replied that delay is always a kind of breach,

since as long as it lasts it is the non-performance of stipulations. I proceeded then to a more exact investigation of the question. And first, as I knew them to be annoyed with many applications for redress by those who had, and those who pretended to have suffered, I attempted to show what I really believe to be the fact, viz. that the injury was much smaller than was imagined, because among the various classes of American debtors, those only should be considered who had the ability, and not the will, to pay at the peace, and were now deprived of the ability. These I supposed to be not numerous ; and as to others, I stated interest as the natural compensation for delay of payment, observing that it was impossible to go into an examination of all the incidental evils.

In the second place, I desired him to consider, that we in turn complained, that the British government had not, as they ought, paid for the slaves who were taken away. That we felt for the situation they were in, of being obliged either to break faith with the slaves whom they had seduced by the offer of freedom, or to violate the stipulations they had made with us upon that subject. That we were willing, therefore, to wave our literal claims ; but had every right to insist on compensation ; and that it would not be difficult for the planters to show, that they had sustained an annual loss from the want of men to cultivate their lands, and thereby produce the means of paying their debts. Mr Pitt exclaimed at this, as if it were an exaggerated statement. I at once acknowledged my belief that in this, as in all similar cases, there might be some exaggeration on both sides ; ‘ but, sir, what I have said tends to show that these complaints and inquiries are excellent, if the parties mean to keep asunder ; if they wish to come together, all such matter should be kept out of sight, and each side perform now, as well as the actual situation of things will permit.’ Mr Pitt then made many professions of an earnest desire to cultivate the best understanding, &c. &c. On the whole, he thought it might be best to consider the subject generally, and to see if, on general ground, some compensation would not be mutually

made. I immediately replied, 'If I understand you, Mr Pitt, you wish to make a new treaty, instead of complying with the old one.' He admitted this to be *in some sort* his idea. I said, that even on that ground I did not see what better could be done, than to perform the old one. 'As to the compensation for negroes taken away, it is too trifling an object for you to dispute, so that nothing remains but the posts; I suppose, therefore, that you wish to retain those posts.' 'Why, perhaps we may.' 'They are not worth the keeping, for it must cost you a great deal of money, and produce no benefit. The only reason you can have to desire them, is to secure the fur trade, and that will centre in this country, let who will carry it on in America.' I gave him the reasons for this opinion, which I am sure is well founded, but I will not trouble you with them. His answer was well turned. 'If you consider these posts as a trivial object, there is the less reason for requiring them.' 'Pardon me, sir, I only state the retaining of them as *useless to you*, but this matter is to be considered in a different point of light. Those who made the peace acted wisely in separating the possessions of the two countries by so wide a water. It is essential to preserve this boundary, if you wish to live in amity with us. Near neighbors are seldom good ones, for the quarrels among borderers frequently bring on wars. It is, therefore, essential for both parties that you should give them up; but as to us it is of particular importance, because our national honor is interested. You hold them with the avowed intention of forcing us to comply with such conditions as you may impose.' 'Why, sir, as to the consideration of national honor, we can retort the observation, and say our honor is concerned in your delay or performance of the treaty.' 'No, sir, your natural and proper course was to comply fully on your part, and if then we had refused a compliance, you might rightfully have issued letters of marque and reprisal to such of your subjects as were injured by our refusal. But the conduct you have pursued naturally excites resentment in every American bosom. We do not think it worth while to go to war with you for these posts; but *we*

know our rights, and will avail ourselves of them, when time and circumstances may suit.'

Mr Pitt asked me if I had powers to treat. I told him I had not, and that we could not appoint any person as minister, they had so much neglected the former appointment. He asked me whether we would appoint a minister if they did. I told him that I could almost promise that we should, but was not authorized to give any positive assurance. The question then was, how to communicate on this subject. I suggested, that since much time might be unnecessarily consumed by reason of the distance and uncertainty of communication, it would perhaps be expedient for them to appoint a minister, and delay his departure until we should have made a similar appointment. Mr Pitt said they might communicate to you their intention to appoint, &c. I told him, that his communication might encounter some little difficulty, because you could not properly hear anything from the British Consuls, these being characters unacknowledged in America. His pride was a little touched at this. 'I should suppose, Mr Morris, that attention might as well be paid to what they say, as that the Duke of Leeds and I should hold the present conversation with you.' 'By no means, sir, I never should have thought of asking a conference with his Grace, if I had not possessed a letter from the President of the United States, which you know, my Lord, I left with you, and which I dare say you have communicated to Mr Pitt.' He had. Mr Pitt said they could in like manner write a letter to one of their consuls. 'Yes, sir, and the *letter* will be attended to, but not the consul, who is in no respect different from any other British subject; and this is the circumstance which I wished you to regard.' He said in reply to this, that etiquette ought not to be pushed so far as to injure business, and keep the countries asunder. I assured him that the rulers of America had too much understanding to care for etiquette; but prayed him at the same time to recollect, that they (the British,) had hitherto kept us at a distance, instead of making advances. That you had gone quite as far as they had any

reason to expect, in writing the letter just mentioned, but that from what had passed in consequence of it, and which, as he might naturally suppose, I had transmitted, we could not but consider them as wishing to avoid an intercourse. He took up this point, and expressed again his hope that I would remove such an idea, assuring me that they were disposed to cultivate a connexion, &c. &c. To this I replied, that any written communications which his Grace of Leeds might make should be duly transmitted ; but I did not like to write mere conversation, because it might be misconceived ; and disagreeable questions afterwards arise, whereas written things remain and speak for themselves. They agreed to the propriety of this sentiment.

I observed further, that our disposition towards a good understanding was evidenced, not only by your letter, but also by the decision of a majority of the House of Representatives, against laying extraordinary restrictions on British vessels in our ports. Mr Pitt said, that instead of restrictions, we ought to give them particular privileges, in return for those which we enjoy here. I assured him that I knew of none, except that of being impressed, a privilege which of all others we least wished to partake of. The Duke of Leeds observed, in the same style of jocularity, that we were at least treated in that respect as the most favored nation, seeing that we were treated like themselves. But Mr Pitt said seriously, that they had certainly evidenced good will towards us, by what they had done respecting our commerce. I replied, therefore, with like seriousness, that their regulations had been dictated by a view to their own interest ; and therefore, as we felt no favor, we owned no obligation. The subject being now pretty well exhausted, they promised to consult together, and give me the result of their deliberations. This I am yet to receive ; but I learn that Mr Greenville has this day consulted some persons skilled in the fur trade, and that from his conversation it seemed probable that they would give up the posts. My information is good.

I have already said that the Ministers here count upon the

nullity of France. They do not however expect that she will violate her treaty with Spain, and therefore they are rather, I believe, in hopes that Spain will submit to such terms as they may impose. How far they may be bound to aid Prussia seems as yet to be doubtful; but for my own part I believe, that a war is inevitable, and I act on that ground. If it does not take place, they will, I think, desire such things of us, in a treaty of commerce, as we shall not be disposed to grant; but if it does happen, then they will give us a good price for our neutrality; and Spain, I think, will do so too; wherefore this appears to be a favorable moment for treating with that court about the Mississippi.

Before I close this letter, already too long, I must entreat permission to make one or two explanatory observations. It is evident that the conduct of this government towards us, from the time of my first interview with the Duke of Leeds, has depended on the contingencies of war or peace with the neighboring powers; and they have kept things in suspense accordingly. When, therefore, they came a little forward, it proved to me their apprehension of a rupture. I have some reason to think, that they are in greater danger than they are themselves aware of, and I have much cause to suspect that they meditate a blow in Flanders, in which it is not improbable that they will be foiled and disappointed. Believing, therefore, that I knew their motives, it only remained to square my conduct and conversation accordingly. And here you will consider, that the characteristic of this nation is pride; whence it follows, that if they are brought to sacrifice a little of this self-importance, they will readily add some other sacrifices. I kept therefore a little aloof, and did not, as I might have done, obtain an assurance that they would appoint a minister if you would. On the contrary, it now stands on such ground that they must write a letter, making the first advance, which you of course will be in possession of. And to that effect I warned them against sending a message by one of their consuls. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

London, July 3d, 1790.

Sir,

This letter will accompany copies of those, which I had the honor to write on the first, and twenty-ninth of May. I have heard nothing since from the Duke of Leeds. On the tenth of June the King prorogued the parliament, which was dissolved on the eleventh. The election will be completed in about ten days, and then the ministers will feel themselves more at liberty to avow their intentions, than they are at present. They will have a great majority, though perhaps weaker by half a dozen, than in the last house, but the immense patronage, which must result from a war, will soon overbalance that difference.

I was told on the tenth, that the Duke of Leeds is to leave the office of secretary of foreign affairs, and is to be succeeded by Lord Hawkesbury, formerly Charles Jenkinson. He is an able man, strongly opposed to America, and it is said from inclination; but perhaps it is from the desire to please his royal master. Such an appointment would look like a bar to any friendly communication with us; but I incline to think otherwise. He will at least be an efficient minister, and whatever he agrees to will go smoothly through the cabinet; whereas the present man is evidently afraid of committing himself, by saying or doing anything positive.

On the seventeenth of June I learnt a conversation, which had recently passed with Mr Greenville about the posts, from the complexion of which I conclude that they are nearly determined to give them up. In the course of that conversation, (in which the minister was collecting information from a gentleman acquainted with the country and its trade,) he said that the Americans had made some overtures for a commercial treaty, which might, perhaps, take place; and that he wished to be prepared, in case that matter should be brought forward, which appeared however to be uncertain.

He mentioned at the same time, but merely as matter of common report, that the Spaniards had agreed to give us the navigation of the Mississippi. I am therefore confirmed in my opinion, that, if they get engaged in a war, they will be glad to form a friendly connexion with us. And as to the contingency of war, I was informed on the twenty-first of June, that about three weeks before that period, they had sent an express over land to India, probably with instructions to prepare for, if not to commence hostilities. This, added to many other circumstances, leaves but little room to doubt of their intentions. Prussia has been arming and negotiating, and seems as if desirous to gain time, till this country can act.

The fleet which lay at Spithead had sailed some days since for Torbay, and is to be joined, it is said, by a Dutch squadron, which came forward in the quality of an ally to Great Britain. The idea of calling upon an ally to assist a British against a Spanish fleet seems to be a little extraordinary. But it would not be extraordinary, that a Dutch squadron should go into the Baltic, and assist the Swedes against Russia.

We are now so near the moment when the curtain is to be drawn up, that I will not trouble you with my conjectures about the scenes which are to be displayed. France, I am persuaded, will not remain an idle spectator. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

GEORGE WASHINGTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

New York, July 7th, 1790.

Dear Sir,

This letter will be short; the intention of it being little more than to acknowledge the receipt of your several favors from London, dated the 7th and 13th of April, and 1st and 2d of May, on the business which had been entrusted to you of a public

nature ; and of your other letters of the 12th of April, and the 3d of May, which more immediately relate to my private requests.

Permit me to thank you, my good sir, for the attention you have given to the latter ; and, as far as your communications with the British Government had gone, to assure you of my entire approbation of your conduct respecting the former. I shall await the answer, which your address of the 30th of April will extort (if silence be not resolved on) from the Duke of Leeds, before I write more fully to you on that head. I am, &c.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

THOMAS JEFFERSON, SECRETARY OF STATE, TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

New York, August 12th, 1790.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of May the 29th to the President of the United States has been duly received. You have placed their proposition of exchanging a minister on proper ground. It must certainly come from them, and come in unequivocal form. With those who respect their own dignity so much, ours must not be counted at nought. On their own proposal, formerly, to exchange a minister, we sent them one. They have taken no notice of that, and talk of agreeing to exchange one now, as if the idea were new. Besides, what they are saying to you, they are talking to us through Quebec ; but so informally, that they may disavow it when they please. It would only oblige them to make the fortune of the poor Major, whom they would pretend to sacrifice. Through him, they talk of a minister, a treaty of commerce, *and alliance*. If the object of the latter be honorable, it is useless ; if dishonorable, inadmissible. These tamperings prove, that they view a war as very possible ; and some symptoms indicate designs against the

Spanish possessions adjoining us. The consequences of their acquiring all the country on our frontier, from the St Croix to the St Mary's, are too obvious to you, to need developement. You will readily see the dangers which would then environ us.

We wish you, therefore, to intimate to them, that we cannot be indifferent to enterprises of this kind. That we should contemplate a change of neighbors with extreme uneasiness; and that a due balance on our borders is not less desirable to us, than a balance of power in Europe has always appeared to them. We wish to be neutral, and we will be so, *if they will execute the treaty fairly, and attempt no conquests adjoining us.* The first condition is just; the second imposes no hardship on them. They cannot complain, that the other dominions of Spain would be so narrow as not to leave them room enough for conquest. If the war takes place, we would really wish to be quieted on these two points, offering in return an honorable neutrality. More than this, they are not to expect. It will be proper that these ideas be conveyed, in delicate and friendly terms; but that they be conveyed, if the war takes place; for it is in that case alone, and not till it be begun, that we would wish our dispositions to be known. But in no case, need they think of our accepting any equivalent for the posts.

I have the honor to be, with great respect and esteem,
Dear Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

London, August 16th, 1790.

Sir,

I had the honor to write to you on the third of July, of which letter I now enclose a copy. I have patiently waited since that period for the answer, which had been promised on the twenty-first of May, to my letter of the thirtieth of April. Had any circumstance turned up, which would in my opinion have justified a new application, it should have been made; but this has not been the case.

You will have seen the declaration, and counter declaration, of the Spanish and British courts, exchanged at Madrid the twenty-fourth of last month. These leave the material ground of controversy in its original state, and the armaments go on with unremitting diligence. The event seems to turn upon the ability and inclination of France, whose condition is far from desirable; but I shall not attempt to describe it, because I have no doubt that Mr Short, being on the spot, will transmit much better information than I can pretend to. The poor king of Hungary, pressed by Prussia, and distracted by the interior commotions of his various dominions, and unsupported by France, has been obliged to accede to terms of pacification, by no means desirable. This leaves Britain and her friends more at liberty to press the other powers. The proceedings of the congress have of course been very secret, and if they had not, a mere private individual in this country could not acquire an early knowledge of them. There is, however, one circumstance which, let things terminate as they may, will, I conceive, have considerable consequences. The king of Prussia has endeavored to obtain from Poland the cession of Thorn and Dantzic. These countries are, you know, already surrounded by his dominions, except towards the sea; and if he had succeeded, or should succeed, he will not only become at once a naval power, but will hold in his hand the key to the great granary of Europe. This, at a period when from the extension of commerce and manufactures in other countries, the want of bread is often feared, and sometimes felt, will give him immense advantages both in peace and war, besides those of rendering his dominions more compact, and of increasing his revenue. It is, I think, hardly possible that Britain and Holland should have wished for his success, and if his failure should be owing to their resistance, it may at no distant period give rise to new connexions and alliances in the north. In the Baltic they have been very busy. The seasons give but little time there for any other naval war, than that which man must wage with the elements. They make therefore the best,

or, if you please, the worst use of their time. Little, however, has been effected, except the havoc of the human race, which is not over numerous in that quarter. The king of Sweden, with infinite gallantry, places himself in situations where he can gain little, and may lose all. Hitherto he has extricated himself by downright fighting, and as it is too late for effectual interference from England or Holland, probably both sides, having sung *Te Deum*, will take breath, and may, perhaps, be content to try what negotiation can do next winter.

I have little doubt but that the ministry here would have agreed to comply with the treaty of peace, had they found themselves engaged in a war, which they have been upon the brink of for some months; and I presume, that in proportion as the clouds shall disperse, they will be less tractable. I have taken patience, and remained here, though I had many private reasons for going to the continent; but as I believed that by being on the spot, I might be useful, especially if a favorable occasion should offer, I thought it my duty to stay.

From some circumstances, too slight to be worth mentioning, I incline to think that such occasion is not far distant; but never, perhaps, were the affairs of Europe in a situation which admitted so little of forming any solid opinion; and this from the spreading of what is called the French disease, in other words, revolt. Hungary, part of Germany, Italy, and Savoy, with France and Flanders, are already in different stages of that disease. Poland is constitutionally afflicted with it. In Sweden and Holland slight circumstances would bring forward seeds, which have long been sown, and no man can tell or even guess how far it may extend, or what may be the consequences. This country is free from the contagion, and likely to continue so. Indeed the English seem in some respects to have changed sentiments and manners with the French. They are as far gone in loyalty as their neighbors in republicanism. Happy America, where alone, I verily believe, both freedom and virtue have their real and substantial existence.

I wait with anxious expectation to hear what congress may have done in relation to this country, as well as upon the important subject of finance; for that also would have no small influence on the British cabinet. Having long been in the habit of contemplating public credit as the most certain and abundant national resource, they will naturally, and indeed necessarily, take up their opinion of us on that ground. And if at the same time their mercantile interest should *feel* that we have a government, it might produce a general conviction that we are not to be trifled with. Incidental circumstances among foreign nations may give us momentary advantages, and doubtless it is the duty of all public servants to watch those moments, and turn them to the best account. But it is by the solidity of our domestic system alone, that we can become permanently and intrinsically respectable. Consequently, it is by that alone, that we can hope for permanent and useful connexions. And although we ought not from such considerations to become supine or inattentive to the measures of the greater maritime powers, which would indeed be very imprudent, yet we may certainly repose with greater confidence on the good faith of others, when they see, and above all when they *feel* the value of our friendship.

I pray your kind excuse, sir, for giving vent to these ideas, which are as much the sentiments of my heart as the dictates of my understanding. As conclusions of reason, they have naturally been adopted by every thinking man in America; but he must come out of it, perhaps, if he would have their importance deeply impressed by the impulsion of daily experience. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

London, August 30th, 1790.

Dear Sir,

It may perhaps be proper to mention one or two things, in relation to the objects treated of in my letters of last

January. And first, of a commerce with the French Islands. Nothing has, I believe, been done in France, which may be favorable to our views ; but the commotions in the Islands themselves will, I presume, operate like liberal regulations of police, and probably the colonists will eventually demand as a right, what some time since they would have accepted as a favor. I am led to believe that we should not be over anxious on this subject just now, because circumstances will perhaps serve us better than we can serve ourselves.

My predictions respecting the Turk have been so far verified, as that he has got rid of one of his enemies upon tolerable terms, for he loses no dominion worth a contest. How far the *intercessions* now making to the Empress of Russia will produce the desired effect, seems not to be clearly ascertained. If a squadron of Dutch or English ships had arrived in the Baltic last May, it is more than probable that the peace of the north would have been restored ; but there are many events which would enable the Empress of Russia to carry on successful operations against both the Turk and the Swede. The armies of the former, which opposed those of the Emperor, cannot suddenly be transported to the quarter where they are now wanted ; neither will the expense of them cease during the campaign. It appears to me that the season is too far advanced for anything Prussia can do, let the inclination of the king be what it may ; and Sweden, unprotected by naval superiority, is exposed to the land force of its enemy, without much chance either of aid or diversion. Finland, which will probably be the object of the Czarina, cannot maintain forces needful to defend it, if the sea communication be cut off. Therefore the whole Prussian army, could it be transported thither, would be worse than useless. And thus the withdrawing of Austria from the war will have less influence than might have been expected.

The people of Flanders seem to be given up, after having been used to distress the House of Austria. Heaven knows what desperation may prompt them to ; but it appears to me

that a wise conduct on the part of France would have acquired for her the dominion of that country; and if ever that should happen, France having at the same time a good constitution, the consequence of this island is gone. Antwerp seems intended by nature for the emporium of European commerce, and the navigation of the Scheldt would undoubtedly be opened if it belonged to a great naval power. That river and the Thames being nearly opposite to each other, mutual visits might be expected, and in these the superiority at land must at length prove decisive.

The situation of France, however, seems at first sight to preclude all effort. The national bank, which was in contemplation, has never taken effect. After deliberating about it and about it, the thing dropped, and they expected to have made out with their new paper currency (*the assignats*;) but my predictions on that subject seem to be verified. Still, however, the situation of their finances is not desperate. But their *Assemblée* is losing ground daily in the public opinion. The army, long encouraged in licentious conduct, is now in revolt. All the bands of society are loosened, and authority is gone. Unless they are soon involved in a foreign war, it is impossible to conjecture what events will take place. For sometime past the ministers have been threatened with the *Lanterne*, and they would gladly get out of office. The great difficulty is, to find successors, or rather substitutes. Lafayette has been contriving an intermediate ministry to last for a few months, till, by the dissolution of the assembly, who, you know, passed a self-denying ordinance, a set could be taken from among the present members of that body. But this will prove a bad business; for if the intermediaries are not able, then they will make things worse; and if they are, they will not give up their places.

We are in hourly expectation of hearing the decision of the *Assemblée* upon the family compact. The Spanish Ambassador has required, in pointed terms, a compliance on the part of France. This, I have good reason to believe, was in con-

cert with the French administration. If it were possible to answer for such a body as the *Assemblée*, and so placed as they are, I would pronounce in favor of their adherence to the terms of that compact. If so, the tone of the British ministry may be a little lowered. In the meantime, both the Spanish and English fleets are out, and were approaching towards each other. Probably each side means only to terrify at present; but Spain will not recede any farther, except in the last necessity.

In a day or two I expect to learn something of their intentions here respecting us; and if I do not hear from them, I shall make a final address to his Grace of Leeds.

It is very flattering to me, Sir, that you are so kind as to approve of my communications with the ministers of this country, so far as they had gone in the beginning of May. I earnestly hope that my subsequent conduct may meet the same favorable interpretation. This you may rely on, that if in any case I go wrong, it will be from an error of judgment. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

London, September 10th, 1790.

My Lord,

At the close of a conversation with your Grace, and the Right Honorable Mr Pitt, on the twenty-first of May last, I was told that you would confer together, and transmit a reply to the letter, which I had the honor of addressing to your Grace on the thirtieth of April. In expectation of that reply, I have patiently waited in this city to the present hour, though called by many affairs to the continent. But my departure cannot be much longer delayed, and therefore it becomes necessary to intrude once more on your Grace's attention.

I was led to believe, my Lord, that a friendly connexion might have taken place between this country and that of which I have the honor to be a citizen. How far it might be use-

ful to Great Britain, I presume not to conjecture ; being perfectly convinced, from the wisdom and extensive information of his Majesty's ministers, that the best rule for private judgment must be derived from their conduct. But, my Lord, I candidly own, that such connexion appears to be of great consequence to America ; and therefore the hope of becoming instrumental in the accomplishment of it was most pleasing ; nor am I ashamed to avow my concern at the disappointment.

Your Grace will readily recollect the purport of the letter, which you did me the honor to write on the twenty-eighth of April, and that mine of the thirtieth entreated a communication of the nature and extent of that redress, which his Majesty's ministers expected upon the specific points of the treaty of peace, and the kind and measure of compensation they would require in case, as had been supposed, the specific performance on our part were now impracticable. Months having elapsed in silence, your Grace will, I hope, pardon me for observing that the pointed avowal of a determination to withhold performance, unless upon certain conditions, the communication of which is withheld, might be construed into unconditional refusal. Your personal integrity and honor, my Lord, the acknowledged justice of his Majesty, and the pride of British faith, prohibit me from harboring that idea. But it may perhaps be entertained by my countrymen, and if it should, it may lead to measures, which in their consequences may eventually induce the two nations to seek rather the means of reciprocal injury, than of mutual advantage. I humbly hope that this may never happen. The sentiment of America has long been conciliatory, and I should feel inexpressible satisfaction if your Grace would supply me with the means of restoring activity to her friendly dispositions.

I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

DUKE OF LEEDS TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Whitehall, September 10th, 1790.

Sir,

I have just received the honor of your letter of this day's date. I well remember the nature of the conversation you allude to, as well as the particular points upon which the two countries mutually complain of a non-observance of treaty. Each party may perhaps have reason for complaint. I can assure you, Sir, I sincerely lament it. I am not entering into a ministerial discussion upon the subject of our not being already further advanced, in what we are both interested in, a real *bonâ fide* intercourse of friendship, but am only acknowledging, confidentially, my own private opinion, and what it has not been hitherto in my power to remedy.

I shall, I trust, be enabled very soon to address myself upon a new subject to General Washington; and in the mean time, shall be very happy to see you, Sir, before your departure for America. I have the honor to be, Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

LEEDS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

London, September 18th, 1790.

Sir,

I had the honor to address you on the sixteenth of August, and stated as nearly as I could the situation of Russia and Sweden. This situation has produced a very natural effect. Sweden being unsupported by her allies, and Russia having nothing to gain by farther fighting, but a part of the Finland deserts, not worth fighting for, they have struck a bargain of peace immediately, without the interference of any one else. This leaves the Russian and Turk to pursue their game single handed. The ministers of Britain are by no means well pleased, that they were not consulted by the Swedes; and I think it probable, that if Russia makes peace with the Turks, it will be

without the mediation of Prussia or England. For, as things are situated, it seems impossible for those powers to do the Empress any mischief before next spring.

The National Assembly of France have also adopted, as a national compact, the old family compact with Spain, and they are arming as fast as their disjointed condition will admit. At the same time, the general opinion of this country seemed to be, that the ministry would obtain very honorable terms from Spain, whereas the ministers themselves were, as I believe, much embarrassed as to the line of conduct which they should pursue. To support the high tone in which they first opened, would probably bring on a bloody war for an empty sound. To recede, would expose them to severe animadversion at home, and a loss of reputation abroad. These circumstances appearing to me favorable, I wrote the letter of the tenth instant, of which a copy is enclosed. It is calculated first, to operate upon an administration, which I believed to be divided in regard to America, and a sovereign who hates the very name, while he prides himself upon his piety and moral fame. Secondly, it was intended as a ground of future justification for any measures, which congress might think proper to adopt; and thirdly, it had, I own, a special view to the nature of this government and people; for if they do eventually get engaged in war, and feel a little from our coldness, and if, in addition thereto, the commercial men find any ground of complaint, it will make them so eager to rectify their mistake, as to give us considerable advantages.

In answer to this letter I received his of the same date, a copy of which is likewise enclosed. This was written in his own hand writing, and as it is said therein to be not ministerial, but confidential, we must so consider it. Consequently it is not a public paper. The inference to be drawn from it is, that the council could not agree as yet upon the answer to be given. Hence I concluded, that those who, pursuing the interests of Great Britain, wish to be on the best terms with America, are outnumbered by those, whose sour prejudices and

hot resentment render them averse to every intercourse, except that which may immediately subserve a selfish policy. These men do not yet know America. Perhaps America does not yet know herself. They believe that British credit is essential to our commerce. Useful, it certainly is, at present; but let our public credit be well established and supported, and in a very few years our commercial resources will astonish the world. We are yet but in the seeding time of national prosperity, and it will be well not to mortgage the crop before it is gathered. Excuse, I pray Sir, this digression. The matter of it is not wholly inapplicable.

I waited upon the Duke of Leeds by appointment on the fifteenth instant, and I saw at once by his countenance, that he felt obliged to act an awkward part. I waited, therefore, for him to begin the conversation, which he did by saying he understood I was going to America. I told him he had mistaken my letter, for that by *the continent* I meant the continent of Europe. After some pause he said, that he hoped soon to fix upon a minister to America. That they had a person in contemplation, who was not however absolutely agreed on. I did not ask who it was. After a farther pause he said, that *in order to save time*, and obviate difficulties, the intention was to send over a gentleman with a common letter of recommendation, but having letters of credence in his pocket. I expressed my perfect approbation of this expedient. He told me that he was earnestly desirous of a real *bonâ fide* connexion, not merely by the words of a treaty, but in reality. I met these by similar professions, but took care to confine them to a commercial intercourse for mutual benefit on liberal terms.

He told me, that as to the two points of the treaty, there were still difficulties. He wished they could be got out of the way. He then hesitated a little, and dropped the conversation. Having waited sometime for him to resume it, and being convinced by his silence that it was intended to hold a conference and say nothing, I determined to try for information in a different way. I began, therefore, by expressing with an air of se-

rious concern my conviction, that their detention of the western posts would form an insurmountable barrier against a treaty with us. Knowing so well as he did the nature of popular governments, he would not be surprised, that some in America should oppose a treaty with Britain from serious doubt as to the policy of the measure, and others from private reasons ; and he must see that holding those posts would form an argument for one, and a pretext for the other. Finding that he felt this, I added, that their conduct in this respect gave serious alarm to reasonable well meaning men. Some believed their design was to deprive us of our share in the fur trade, which they considered as a serious injury, but others were convinced that holding those posts was attended with great and useless expense to Britain, which the benefits of the fur trade by no means compensated, and even that she would derive those benefits whether that trade were carried on through the medium of Canada, or of the United States. Hence they inferred some other, and consequently some hostile views. So that every murder committed by the Indians was attributed to British intrigue ; and although some men of liberal minds might judge differently, their arguments would have little weight with the many, who felt themselves aggrieved. He owned that there was force in these reflections. I told him further, that I did not presume to judge of the great circle of European politics ; but according to my limited comprehension, I was led to suppose, that they could not act with the same decisive energy towards their neighbors, while they doubted of our conduct.

He said I was perfectly right ; and he said so in a manner which showed, that this had been urged and felt during the late negotiations. I proceeded, therefore, a little farther, premising that this conversation was merely from one gentleman to another, and prayed him to consider, that in a war between Britain and the House of Bourbon, (a thing that must happen at some time or other,) we can give the West India Islands to whom we please, without engaging in the war ourselves, and our conduct must be governed by our interest. He acknowledged

that this was naturally to be expected, and it seemed from his manner, that the same thing had been represented before, but not in such strong colors. I observed, that those preferences which we had a right to impose would have a most extensive operation; assured him of my sincere belief, that their exclusive system, as far as it related to the commerce of their islands, had a tendency to injure that navigation, which it was their object to increase, because if we met them on equal ground of restriction, they would lose more in one way than they gained in another; that they had many large ships employed in carrying the single article of tobacco; and if we should pass a navigation act to meet theirs, they could not bring us a yard of cloth which contained Spanish wool, and so of other things. I thought I could perceive, that considerations like these had already given them some alarm. I therefore said, that I supposed his people had transmitted information of the attempts made in congress to adopt such regulations. He said they had. I observed that not having yet received the laws passed by congress I should not say exactly what had been done. That I hoped things were yet open for treaty. *That doubtless there were many persons in this country, who, to gratify the resentment occasioned by losses or disappointments in the American war, would be glad to urge on a state of commercial hostilities; but this would prove, perhaps, a losing game to both.* He really thought it would.

Having gone as far in that line as was useful, I took a short turn in my subject, and said I had waited with great patience during the negotiations they were carrying on, because I supposed *they would naturally square their conduct towards us by their position in respect to other nations.* I made this observation in a careless manner, as a thing of course; but immediately fixing my eye upon him, he showed that it was exactly the circumstance they had wished to conceal. I added, that finding the northern courts were at peace, and *supposing they had come to their final decisions with respect to the House of Bourbon,* I thought it probable that they were prepared to speak definitely to us also. Here I waited for his answer,

which, indeed, I did not expect to receive. He was sufficiently embarrassed, and from his look and manner I collected quite as much as he was willing to communicate.

After some little sayings of no consequence, he asked me what the United States would think of the undefined claim of Spain to America. Having no objection to take that information from his questions, which could not be drawn forth in his answers, I told him that it would make no impression on our minds. That the Spaniards, being in fact apprehensive of danger from us, were disposed to make sacrifices for our friendship. That the navigation of the Mississippi, hitherto the bone of contention, was, I believed, given up by them already, or soon would be so; and as for their claims, they never could affect us, and therefore we did not care anything about them. That the reason for withholding that navigation, hitherto, was the fear of contraband trade, and for the same reason they must, in my opinion, sacrifice the last man, and last shilling, upon the question about Nootka Sound. He said he had always thought the danger of contraband ought to be considered in dealing on this subject, for that nations, like individuals, ought to treat with candor and honesty. We had a good deal of conversation on that, and other topics, in which America was not directly concerned; and then I told him, that if they came to any determination in regard to us speedily, I should wish to be apprized of it. He assured me that I should, and offered to make his communications to you through me, and for that purpose to address his letters to me in Paris; but for reasons communicated in a former letter, I thought it best to decline this offer, and therefore observed, that his own packets would give him a speedier and more certain means of conveyance. I then took my leave.

I have troubled you, Sir, with the leading features of this conversation, that you might the better judge of the conclusions I draw from it. I think the cabinet is divided on the question of war or peace. If France appeared strong enough to excuse a *retrograde manœuvre*, I believe they would discover all at

once that Spain has better reasons to urge, than they had been before apprized of, and therefore, *on principles of justice*, and having received the strongest assurances of brotherly love from the Catholic King, the Defender of the Faith would disarm. His ministers will not treat with us at present, unless they can see their way to an offensive and defensive alliance, which we shall be in no hurry to contract. Should war break out, the anti-American party will, I believe, agree to *any* terms; for it is more the taste of the medicine which they nauseate, than the quantity of the dose. Mr Pitt, I believe, wishes a continuance of peace. Observe that he is rather the Queen's man than the King's, and that since his Majesty's illness, she has been of great consequence. This depends in part on a medical reason. To prevent the relapse of persons who have been mad, they must be kept in constant awe of somebody; and it is said that the physician of the king gave the matter in charge to his royal consort, who performs that, like every other part of her conjugal duty, with singular zeal and perseverance. He, and all those who are in possession of his entire confidence, wish, it is said, for war; which gives, you know, great patronage, and, by the increase of taxes and offices, increases the influence and power of the crown. The king, *and his friends*, are also violently indisposed to America.

Things being so situated, and having business on the continent, I shall leave this city in a few days, and shall perhaps write a further letter of lamentations to the Duke of Leeds before I go. I intend to write such a letter to you on the whole business, as may, in case of need, be laid before the legislature, and consequently before the public.

I long since expressed my opinion to you, Sir, that the appearances of prosperity here were fallacious. In nothing are they more so, than in the affairs of the India Company, which are deplorably bad; and they are now engaged in a war with Tippoo Saib, which, terminate how it may, must make them worse.

It is time to close this long epistle. Let me therefore en-

treat you to receive the assurances of that sincere respect and esteem, with which I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

London, September 24th, 1790.

My Lord,

An application which has been made to me by a Mr Samuel Makins, master of an American ship, and which I have formerly transmitted to Mr Burgess, brings forward some points on which I find myself, most reluctantly, obliged to trouble your Grace.

It appears, first, that the American ship was stopped on the high seas, and detained by a British vessel of war, which took away several of the crew, and kept one, who was a British subject. Secondly, it appears that seamen taken in this port from an American ship, who have sworn before a magistrate in America that they are American citizens, are nevertheless detained, unless the master of the ship will swear that they were *born* in America. And thirdly, it appears that American seamen, who have entered on board of a British ship of war, are detained, notwithstanding the claims made by the master to whom they are bound by the usual articles.

On the first point, I am obliged to mention, my Lord, that interrupting vessels in their voyages, and taking away those who navigate them, may have disagreeable consequences; and by reminding your Grace of that sentiment, which was excited by the conduct of a Spanish frigate in Nootka Sound, I render, I am sure, all comments unnecessary.

On the second point, I must take the liberty to observe, that the very circumstance of being on board an American ship ought to raise a presumption of citizenship; but when that is strengthened by the oaths of the men taken in America, proof should be required to overturn, not to corroborate it. But, my Lord, it must be impossible to obtain the evidence required, in

many cases, unless the master will hazard a deposition to facts not in his knowledge. Another circumstance of a most delicate nature is, the insisting that none but persons *born in America* shall be privileged from the impress. I humbly conceive, my Lord, that previous to the year 1775, those born in America were equally subjects of his Majesty, with those born in England, and many of them, I believe, still continue so. By the treaty of peace, the sovereign of this country relinquished all rights over those then in America, who chose to take the benefit of it; and if the compact can be set aside in the case of a mariner, I fear that many others will no longer rely upon it. This idea, my Lord, presses much upon my mind.

On the third point, I pray leave to submit to your Grace, whether it is consistent to claim British seamen, who have contracted to serve in American vessels, and yet withhold American seamen, who have contracted to serve in British vessels. Pardon me for adding, that this would justify a practice, which I hope may never take place, of manning the privateers of your enemies with the seamen of America.

In my regard for the peace and happiness of the two countries, your Grace will find, I trust, the proper apology for bringing these things before you. I the less regret having been detained in town for that purpose, as it gives me an occasion to reiterate the assurances of that respect, with which I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

London, September 24th, 1790.

Sir,

Just about to leave this city, I have been detained for some hours by an object, which appears to me important. I have already had occasion to mention the impress of American sea-

men, to serve on board of British ships of war. The ministers seemed desirous of doing what was right, and of avoiding just ground of complaint; but the orders for an impress being of necessity entrusted to agents, neither scrupulous nor delicate, it becomes as barbarous in the execution, as in the principle it is violent and despotic. Allowances are to be made in judging such cases, but I had been given to understand, that the principles adopted by the administration were such as ought not *by us* to be admitted.

I must own to you, Sir, that my position was, in this respect, disagreeable. I did not wish to assume the management of affairs not committed to me, nor put on the appearance of a character, to which I had no pretension; and yet, I could not be an indifferent witness to the injuries sustained by my fellow citizens. Liable to censure for neglect, and to the imputation of hunting employment, but feeling alike guiltless of the one, and incapable of the other, I determined neither to seek for causes of complaint, nor yet to avoid them, but submit my conduct to the dictate of occasion. Pardon me, Sir, for making myself my subject. To you an explanation of actions and motives is due. And as for the world, I shall never take pains to conceal the one, nor communicate the other.

On the seventeenth instant, Mr Cutting called to mention the case of an American, who had been impressed, and, after an order obtained for his release, had been ill used, confined, and was then in fetters, expecting severe and ignominious punishment. I immediately went to Whitehall, and waited some time for the Duke of Leeds, or Mr Burgess, to arrive. Mr Burgess at length came; and upon my showing him the papers, and explaining the business, he immediately took measures to procure the needful redress. He expressed, at the same time, in very proper terms, the regret he felt for such abuses of authority. Next morning, Captain Makins applied to me, (as being acquainted with the owners of his ship,) to assist in procuring the release of his mate and seamen. He told me, that previous to his leaving New York, a part of his crew had made oath

that they were citizens of America. Arrived at the mouth of the channel, he was stopped by a British frigate, which took away some of them, but at length returned all except one, who was an Irishman. After this, he passed several vessels of war, without receiving either insult or molestation; but in the river, so many of his men were taken out, that he was obliged to hire others, for the security of his ship. Some of the men so taken were induced to enter into the British service, as he informed me, by ill usage, threats, and particularly by the assurance, that having nobody here to speak for them, their case was desperate, and therefore they might as well take the bounty as let it alone, for go they must.

Many aggravating circumstances were related; but as these are generally foreign to the merits of a question, I desired him to write me a letter, simply stating the facts. Among these, were a refusal to deliver the men who had entered, a rejection of all evidence other than his oath, and the insisting that this evidence should prove the men to have been born in America. I immediately transmitted that letter, with the papers accompanying it, to Mr Burgess, who sent them to Mr Stephens, the Secretary of the Admiralty. Yesterday, Captain Makins called again, complaining that he could get no satisfaction from the admiralty board, nor from the regulating captain; but on the contrary was treated by the latter with insult. I immediately wrote a note to Mr Burgess, who assigned the death of Mr Stephens' son in a duel, as the cause why the affair had been neglected; and gave me the assurance, that he would pay every attention to it. An event so distressing would certainly call from all other cares the mind of a father. I could not, therefore, insist on the decisive answer which I wished. But having been repeatedly told, that the practice was such as is above mentioned, I wrote to the Duke of Leeds the letter, of which the enclosed is a copy. You will perceive, Sir, that I have sought rather to bring forward the particular objects for consideration, than to dilate those observations to which they give rise. I will not trouble you with any comment on this transac-

tion, but only entreat that you will excuse my interference. Having acted without authority, there is at least this advantage to the public, that my conduct may be avowed or disavowed, as circumstances shall render most proper. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, November 22d, 1790.

Dear Sir,

My last letter was of the twenty-fourth of September. Since that period, I have passed through Flanders and a part of Germany, and having coasted the Rhine to Strasburg, came thence to this city.

As I conjectured, so it has happened, that my longer continuance in London would have been useless. Spain finding from the revolt of the marine, and other circumstances, that whatever might be the intention, or rather wish, of France, no real aid could be hoped for from a country, where even the semblance of authority is gone, has submitted to the imperious demands of Britain. This is a great point in the general system. From henceforth, the benefits derived by Spain from her colonies must wither away, and if she should hereafter wage war to cancel an onerous compact, it is highly probable, that one or more independent monarchies may be established in that large portion of the new world, which she now occupies. Nothing of this sort can be indifferent to us. In the great course of events, which divine Providence may have marked out, human wisdom can do but little, and to effect that little, we must approach as nearly as possible to our comprehension the view of futurity, and bestow on the present that cool consideration, with which every one can examine the deeds that were done in the old time before us. The independence of all America will place us forward as the bulwark of our neighbors; and at the same time, it must loosen our hold upon Europe. I consider the several colonies to the south of

us, as a pledge in our hands for the good conduct of those powers to which they belong. We now derive an influence from their reciprocal jealousies, which we shall soon, I trust, secure by our own internal force. This subject opens a field too vast for present discussion, but it leads to another of narrower compass, which we at present tread.

England will not, I am persuaded, enter into a treaty with us, unless we give for it more than it is worth now, and infinitely more than it can be worth hereafter. Had they got engaged in a war, and could they in such war have obtained our aid, they would have paid high. But no price could, in my poor opinion, have compensated to us the ill consequences which must have followed. In proportion as her commerce with our neighbors becomes more extensive, and our naval force more evident, in that same proportion shall we find the advantage of being freed from any stipulations with her. A present bargain would be that of a young heir with an old usurer. Believing in our wants, she will impose terms which we ought not, cannot consent to. This, at least, is my serious belief. A different idea may be entertained by others, who have better information, more experience, or clearer judgment; and the propriety of each opinion must be decided by the arbitrament of time. At present we may consider the western posts, which belong to us, as a part of what Britain means to give for privileges of trade, which in her hands turn always to gold. This, which is very like buying us with our own money, would enable the minister to go down to the House of Commons with perfect ease and self complacency. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON, SECRETARY OF STATE.

London, December 24th, 1790.

Dear Sir,

I did not receive your letter of the twelfth of August, until yesterday afternoon, or I should have made an earlier reply.

I am very happy to find that you approve of the ground on which the interchange of ministers with this country was placed, and the judgment formed respecting the posts. I am led to fear, that my conduct in regard to our impressed seamen has not been equally fortunate ; but I hope the interference will be excused. Having no other guide, than my own sense of our interest and honor, it is not improbable that I may have missed my way. It was with much anxiety that I took any one of those steps, to which I found myself impelled.

My letters to the President, subsequent to the month of May, will have communicated my conduct, and the opinion by which it was directed. I flatter myself, that on the subject of an alliance with this country, they will be found conformable to the sentiments which you express, and which will ever I hope govern the councils of our country.

It was my good fortune also to anticipate your ideas respecting the designs of Britain upon the Spanish possessions, and therefore, whenever they mentioned to me the claims of Spain as highly interesting to us, I declared, (but as my private opinion only,) that we should view those claims of exclusive right with perfect indifference, from a conviction that it never would be exercised to our prejudice. This was with the double view of keeping up their disquietude about connexions, which we might form with Spain, and of preventing them from having any shadow of pretext to embroil us with that court hereafter, should the existing dispute be amicably adjusted.

Before I dismiss this subject, indulge me with your pardon for hinting an idea, on which I have formed no decisive opinion, but which may perhaps merit some consideration. Spain, from the situation of France, the sense of her own weakness, and the effects of her late treaty with Britain, may, perhaps, wish for an effectual guarantee of her transatlantic dominions ; and perhaps she may deem that which we can give more important, than what Britain holds out. Perhaps she might incline to give something valuable for our friendship and protection.

The convention between Britain and Spain having been

completed, and a bill for the government of Quebec being in agitation, I thought it might be well to pass a few days here, and therefore, having private business sufficient to prevent the drawing of any direct conclusions of a public nature, I came hither on Sunday, the twelfth instant. I made the needful inquiries respecting the Quebec system, and on the fourteenth called at Whitehall. The Duke of Leeds being absent, I left a card, and on the eighteenth paid his Grace another visit. The council was then breaking up, and as he had much to do, he sent Mr Burgess to me with an apology. This gentleman gave me a deal of civil nothingness; was glad that our difficulties about the impress were at an end; had during my absence received frequent applications from Mr Cutting, and, in consequence of what passed between us, had paid every attention to them. Administration had every desire I could wish for treaty. Many cabinet councils had been held upon it. A great many difficulties had arisen in fixing on the persons to whom the management should be committed. This matter, however, was adjusted. A reference had been made above three months since to Lord Hawkesbury. His Lordship very diligent, but his report not yet made. When received, no time would be lost in setting all the different engines at work. Hoped we should soon have residents with each other, &c. &c. &c. I heard him quietly out, and then replied, that I was sorry to have interrupted his attention to other affairs. Having been called by private business to London, I thought it my duty to let them know I was alive. If his Grace wished to see me, I would wait on him at such time as he might indicate; that my stay here would be short; that I should write to America before my departure, and if I learnt nothing more than that things remained in the same state of uncertainty in which I had left them I should say so. It was for them and not for me to consider what consequences delay might produce to the British commerce.

The reputation of the United States rises fast; and although our enemies make objections to the funding system, yet that

step towards the establishment of public credit has produced a sensible effect on those opinions, which no administration will wholly disregard. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

London, December 28th, 1790.

Dear Sir,

This will accompany what I had the honor to write on the twenty-fourth. In the afternoon of that day I received a note from Mr Burgess, appointing an hour on the twenty-fifth for an interview with the Duke of Leeds. I attended, but something or other kept his Grace away. The twenty-sixth I received a note apologizing for the disappointment, and requesting my attendance the twenty-seventh. I waited on him again. A note had been sent, informing me that a severe indisposition kept the Duke at home; but this I did not receive in season to prevent the visit. Mr Burgess therefore mentioned to me the contents of it. The Duke, it seems, wished, if I had any communications to make before I went to Paris, that they should come through Mr Burgess. I told him, that as he well knew, I had to make none, and only put myself in the way of receiving them. He said that the business remained as it was when he last spoke to me; that he could now say, however, the Duke had a person in his eye to be sent to America. I told him carelessly, that I had heard Mr Elliott was appointed. He said no appointment had been made; it would be improper, until they should have determined what such person was to do. I smiled at this, and he was a little confused. He said he wished to make their communications through me, and hoped I should be again in London *next spring*. I told him, that perhaps I might, but that was of no consequence; they could easily find a channel of their own.

There was nothing in this which at all surprised me. It

needs no comment, and is, indeed, exactly what I expected. *Next spring* they will know better what to look for from their present negotiations. This intended appointment of Mr Elliott was during the height of the armament. He, on being spoken to, thought the affair was concluded, and mentioned it to his friends. One of them told me of it. At that time he was to have gone out immediately ; but the whole affair is now suspended.

I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

CORRESPONDENCE,
OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE,
CONCERNING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION,
AND THE
AFFAIRS OF FRANCE.

CORRESPONDENCE,
CONCERNING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION,
AND THE
AFFAIRS OF FRANCE.

TO THE COUNT DE MOUSTIER.*

Paris, February 23d, 1789.

IF I should attempt, my dear Sir, to thank you for the kind introductions you have given me to your friends, I could not succeed in giving expression to my feelings. You, who know how much they are attached to you, will better conceive, than I can describe, the cordial reception which these letters procured me. The more I see of Paris, the more sensible I am of your sacrifices in leaving it, to traverse a great ocean, and establish yourself with a people, as yet too new to relish that society, which forms here the delight of life. For devoting thus to the public service both your time and enjoyments, you have as yet been but poorly recompensed. The rich reward remains behind, in that success, which I hope and believe will at length crown your efforts to unite the two countries in bonds of interest and affection indissoluble.

* Afterwards the Marquis de Moustier. He succeeded M. de la Luzerne as Minister from France to the United States. He filled diplomatic stations in England and Prussia, adhered to the royal cause, returned to France with Louis the Eighteenth, and died in February, 1817.

Your nation is now in a most important crisis, and the great question, shall we hereafter have a constitution, or shall will continue to be law, employs every mind, and agitates every heart in France. Even voluptuousness itself rises from its couch of roses, and looks anxiously abroad at the busy scene to which nothing can now be indifferent.

Your nobles, your clergy, your people, are all in motion for the elections. A spirit, which has been dormant for generations, starts up and stares about, ignorant of the means of obtaining, but ardently desirous to possess its object,—consequently, active, energetic, easily led, but also easily, too easily misled. Such is the instinctive love of freedom, which now grows warm in the bosom of your country. That respect for his sovereign, which forms the distinctive mark of a Frenchman, stimulates and fortifies on the present occasion those sentiments, which have hitherto been deemed most hostile to monarchy; for Louis the Sixteenth has himself proclaimed from the throne a wish, that every barrier should be thrown down, which time or accident may have opposed to the general felicity of his people.

It would be presumptuous in me even to guess at the effects of such causes, operating on materials and in situations, of which I confess to you the most profound ignorance. I feel that I have already gone too far, in attempting to describe what I think I have perceived. But before I quit the subject, I must express the wish, the ardent wish, that this great ferment may terminate, not only to the good, but to the glory of France. On the scenes which her great theatre now displays, the eyes of the Universe are fixed, even with anxiety, and the national honor is deeply interested in a successful issue. Indulge me also, I pray, in conveying the opinion, that until that issue be known, every arrangement both foreign and domestic must feel a pause.

Horace tells us, that in crossing the sea we change our climate, not our souls. I can say, what he could not, that I find on this side of the Atlantic a resemblance to what I left on the

other ; a nation which exist in hopes, prospects, and expectations. The reverence for ancient establishments gone, existing forms shaken to the very foundation, and a new order of things about to take place, in which, perhaps, even the very names of all former institutions will be disregarded.

To judge of the present turmoil, I can give you no better standard, than by telling you what is seriously true, that when I took up the pen, it was to give you news of your friends, and to describe the impression made on my mind by the objects, which incessantly present themselves in this great capital, I will not say of France, but of Europe. And have I done it? Yes ; for the one great object in which all are engaged has swallowed up, like the rod of Aaron in Egypt, every other enchantment by which France was fascinated. I am determined, however, after having pestered you so much with a recital of what will be told you from other quarters much more intelligibly, and with a knowledge of all the secret springs which produce those movements, I am determined, I say, that this letter shall give you some entertainment ; and for this purpose, I shall enclose in it several letters from your friends, who have charged me with the very agreeable commission of transmitting them to you.

I will trespass no farther on your patience ; but still I must impose the task on your good nature, of presenting my affectionate remembrances to my friends, who are about you. I will write to them if I have time, but the hours fly so quickly in Paris ! I will not let them escape me, without assuring you of the esteem and respect, with which

I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO WILLIAM CARMICHAEL. *

Paris, February 25th, 1789.

Dear Sir,

As soon as I can place objects here in due arrangement, I shall proceed to Holland. Before I take there my last engagements, I wish most earnestly to be, through you, in such treaty as *to leave room*, for I expect that those engagements will bind me as to all future operations. From Holland I shall perhaps be obliged to go to England. But I contemplate, in all cases, a return to this capital, as speedily as possible; and from hence I wish to go to Madrid. You will calculate, however, that as the most important scene acted for many years on the European theatre will, in the next spring, be displayed at this place, I, in common with all others, have a curiosity to see it. You must also consider, that I have motives stronger than curiosity; for until the States-General shall have decided on the important objects for which they are convened, their government can make no solid arrangements for anything. Of this be assured, that if nothing happens very unexpected, I will see you in Spain before I return to America.

Lafayette is out of town. He is gone to Auvergne to get himself elected, either for the Noblesse or the Tiers Etats. I hope the former, for he would otherwise, in my opinion, be too desperately estranged from those of his own class. As he did not communicate to me his hesitation, I presume that he had determined, for he made some important communications just before his departure. Apropos—a term which my Lord Chesterfield well observes we generally use to bring in what is not at all to the purpose—apropos then, I have here the strangest employment imaginable. A republican, and just as it were emerged from that assembly, which has formed one of the most republican of all republican constitutions, I preach incessantly respect for the prince, attention to the rights of the nobility,

* Chargé d' Affaires from the United States to Spain.

and moderation, not only in the object, but also in the pursuit of it. All this, you will say, is none of my business; but I consider France as the natural ally of my country, and of course, that we are interested in her prosperity; besides, to say the truth, I love France, and, as I believe the king to be an honest and good man, I sincerely wish him well, and the more so, as I am persuaded that he earnestly desires the felicity of his people. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, March 3d, 1789.

Dear Sir,

Herewith you have a copy of what I had the honor to write on the twenty-third of last month. Since that period, there are advices here, which announce the re-establishment of the King of Great Britain's health; but from a letter I have just now received from the Marquis de la Luzerne,* I am disposed to doubt the fact.

The other day I saw the Duc de Castries, who served in America under the title of the Comte de Charlu. He desired to be remembered to you, and so did General Duplessis,† who has been promoted lately. Our friend, the Marquis de Lafayette, is now in Auvergne attending his election. This country presents an astonishing spectacle to one, who has collected his ideas from books and information half a dozen years old. Everything is *à l'Anglais*, and a desire to imitate the English prevails alike in the cut of a coat, and the form of a constitution. Like the English, too, all are engaged in parliamenteering; and when we consider how novel this last business must be, I assure you their progress is far from contemptible.

* At this time Ambassador in England from France,

† He served in the United States during the revolution.

Poor General Chastellux * is no more. I have seen his widow, an amiable woman, who is not the less lovely for the tears she sheds to his memory. A fine boy remains as the pledge of connubial tenderness. I think it would give her great pleasure, if you took the trouble to mingle in a short letter condolence for one event, and congratulations for the other. You would in that case oblige me by confiding the letter to my care. Excuse me, I pray, for dropping this hint, and do me the justice to believe, that with sincere esteem and respect I am yours,

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO JOHN JAY.

Paris, March 4th, 1789.

Dear Sir,

Although I am much pressed for time, and consequently cannot indulge myself in the pleasure of a long conversation, I must pay you a visit, and say how do you do, while I deliver the packages, which Mr Jefferson is so kind as to entrust to my care. I will not have the assurance, with his dispatches in my hand, to say a word about politics. And more especially, as he has not only the advantage, by frequent access to the ministers, of seeing more distinctly those movements, which others contemplate at a distance ; but also because he is very much in the confidence of the patriotic party here, and consequently well informed of their views and intentions.

If, in the course of my observations, anything should turn up worthy of notice, I will seize an early opportunity to make the communication. But my present opinion is, that until some time after the States-General shall have assembled, this government will offer little or nothing for the contemplation of your department. If any new lesson were wanting to impress on our hearts a deep sense of the mutability of human affairs,

* Major General in Rochambeaus's army while in the United States, and author of an interesting book of travels in this country.

the double contrast between France and America two years ago, and at the present moment, will surely furnish that important lesson.

I trust that my country, in proportion as she acquires dignity by wise and honest measures, will show to others the respect and attention, which, while they flatter and conciliate the weak on whom they are bestowed, shed lustre on the greatness from which they emanate. I wish—but why attempt to express those hopes and wishes, which constantly swell my heart for her prosperity? To read or write them all would tire both you and me; besides, it is a useless task, for I am persuaded you will find them all in your own bosom. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO DR JOHN JONES.

Paris, April 18th, 1789.

My Dear Doctor,

I am pretty well convinced that I am not fit for a traveller; and yet I thought otherwise when I left America. But what will you say to a man, who has passed through Rouen without looking at the great bell, and who has been above two months in Paris without ascending to the top of Notre Dame; who has not been inside of any church whatever, except one which is building; who has not been but three times at Versailles, and on neither of those times has seen the King or Queen, or had the wish to see them; and who, if he should continue here twenty years, would continue in ignorance of the length of the Louvre, the breadth of the Pont Neuf, the depth of the Seine, and a thousand other lengths, breadths, and dimensions, which are of the last importance, as everybody knows?

Should you ask me what I have seen, I might reply in the words of Nat Hyde, of stammering memory, *It is hard to say*. A man in Paris lives in a sort of whirlwind, which turns him round so fast that he can see nothing. And as all men and

things are in the same vertiginous condition, you can neither fix yourself nor your object for regular examination. Hence the people of this metropolis are under the necessity of pronouncing their definitive judgment from the first glance ; and being thus habituated to shoot flying, they have what the sportsmen call a quick sight. *Et pede Herculeum.* They know a wit by his snuff-box, a man of taste by his bow, and a statesman by the cut of his coat. It is true, that, like other sportsmen, they sometimes miss ; but, then, like other sportsmen, too, they have a thousand excuses, besides the want of skill. The fault you know may be in the dog, or the bird, or the powder, or the flint, or even the gun, without mentioning the gunner.

We are at present in a fine situation for what the bucks and bloods would term a frolic, or high fun. The ministers have disgusted this city by the manner of convoking them to elect their representatives for the States-General, and at the same time bread is getting dearer, so that when the people assemble on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday next, what with hunger and discontent, the least spark would set everything in a flame. The state physicians have, by way of antidote, brought between fifteen and twenty thousand regular troops within and about the city, so that at any rate the *bons Bourgeois* may not have all the fun to themselves. This measure will rather tend to produce than to prevent a riot. For some of the young nobility have brought themselves to an active faith in the natural equality of mankind, and spurn at everything which looks like restraint. There are some anecdotes of this sort, the most whimsical and ridiculous imaginable, but I have neither time nor inclination to communicate them.

I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, April 29th, 1789.

Dear Sir,

I had the pleasure to write to you a short letter on the third of last month. Monsieur de Lafayette is since returned from his political campaign in Auvergne, crowned with success. He had to contend with prejudices, and the interests of his order, and with the influence of the Queen and Princes, (except the Duke of Orleans;) but he was too able for his opponents. He played the orator with as much eclat as ever he acted the soldier, and is at this moment as much envied and hated as his heart could wish. He is also much beloved by the nation, for he stands forward as one of the principal champions for her rights.

The elections are finished throughout this kingdom, except in the capital, and it appears from the instructions given to the representatives, (called here *les Cahiers*,) that certain points are universally demanded, which when granted and secured will render France perfectly free, as to the principles of the constitution. I say the *principles*, for one generation at least will be required to render the practice familiar. We have, I think, every reason to wish that the patriots may be successful. The generous wish that a free people must have to disseminate freedom, the grateful emotion which rejoices in the happiness of a benefactor, and a strong personal interest as well in the liberty as in the power of this country, all conspire to make us far from indifferent spectators.

I say, that we have an *interest* in the liberty of France. The leaders here are our friends. Many of them have imbibed their principles in America, and all have been fired by our example. Their opponents are by no means rejoiced at the success of our revolution, and many of them are disposed to form connexions of the strictest kind, with Great Britain. The commercial treaty emanated from such dispositions; and according to the usual course of those events, which are shap-

ed by human wisdom, it will probably produce the exact reverse of what was intended by the projectors. The spirit of this nation is at present high, and M. Necker is very popular; but if he continues long in the administration, it will be somewhat wonderful. His enemies are numerous, able, and inveterate. His supporters are indifferent as to his fate, and will protect him no longer than while he can aid in establishing a constitution. But when once that great business is accomplished, he will be left to stand on his own ground. The court wish to get rid of him, and unless he shows himself very strong in the States-General, they will gratify their wishes. His ability as a minister will be much contested in that assembly, but with what success time only can determine.

The materials for a revolution in this country are very indifferent. Everybody agrees that there is an utter prostration of morals; but this general position can never convey to an American mind the degree of depravity. It is not by any figure of rhetoric, or force of language, that the idea can be communicated. A hundred anecdotes, and a hundred thousand examples, are required to show the extreme rottenness of every member. There are men and women who are greatly and eminently virtuous. I have the pleasure to number many in my own acquaintance; but they stand forward from a back ground deeply and darkly shaded. It is however from such crumbling matter, that the great edifice of freedom is to be erected here. Perhaps, like the stratum of rock, which is spread under the whole surface of their country, it may harden when exposed to the air; but it seems quite as likely that it will fall and crush the builders.

I own to you that I am not without such apprehensions, for there is one fatal principle which pervades all ranks. It is a perfect indifference to the violation of engagements. Inconstancy is so mingled in the blood, marrow, and very essence of this people, that when a man of high rank and importance laughs to day at what he seriously asserted yesterday, it is considered as in the natural order of things. Consistency is a phenom-

enon. Judge, then, what would be the value of an association, should such a thing be proposed, and even adopted. The great mass of the common people have no religion but their priests, no law but their superiors, no morals but their interest. These are the creatures who, led by drunken curates, are now in the high road *à la liberté*, and the first use they make of it is to form insurrections everywhere for the want of bread. We have had a little riot here yesterday, and the day before, and I am told that some men have been killed; but the affair was so distant from the quarter in which I reside, that I know nothing of the particulars.

I am almost at the bottom of my paper, without mentioning what I at first intended. Six days ago I got from the maker your watch, with two copper keys, and one golden one, and a box containing a spare spring and glasses, all which I have delivered to Mr Jefferson, who takes charge of them for you. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO JOHN JAY.

Paris, July 1st, 1789.

My Dear Sir,

I am too much occupied to find time for the use of a cypher, and in effect the government here is so much occupied with its own affairs, that in transmitting to you a letter under an envelope there is no risk. This, however, I am pretty certain will go safe. The States-General have now been a long time in session, and have done nothing. Hitherto they have been engaged in a dispute, whether they shall form one body or three. The commons, who are represented by a number equal to both the others, and who, besides, have at least one half the representatives of the clergy, insist on forming a single house. They have succeeded; but the nobles deeply feel their situation. The king, after siding with them,

was frightened into an abandonment of them. He acts from terror only.

The soldiery in this city, particularly the French guards, declare they will not act against the people. They are now treated by the nobility, and parade about the streets drunk, huzzaing for the *Tiers*. Some of them have in consequence been confined, not by the force but by the adroitness of authority. Last night this circumstance became known, and immediately a mob repaired to the prison. The soldiers on guard unfixed their bayonets and joined the assailants. A party of dragoons ordered on duty to disperse the rioters, thought it better to drink with them, and return back to their quarters. The soldiers, with others confined in the same prison, were then paraded in triumph to the Palais Royal, which is now the liberty pole of this city, and there they celebrated, as usual, their joy. Probably this evening some other prisons will be opened; for *liberté* is now the general cry, and authority is a name, not a real existence. The court are about to form a camp in the neighborhood of Paris, of 25,000 men, under the command of the Marechal de Broglie. I do not know him personally, therefore cannot judge what may be expected from his talents; but all my information goes to the point, that he will never bring his army to act against the people. The *Gardes du Corps* are as warm adherents in general to the *Tiers*, as anybody else, strange as that may seem; so that, in effect, the sword has slipped out of the Monarch's hands, without his perceiving a tittle of the matter.

All these things in a nation, not yet fitted by education and habit for the enjoyment of freedom, give me frequently suspicions, that they will greatly overshoot their mark, if indeed they have not already done it. Already some people talk of limiting the king's negative upon the laws. And as they have hitherto felt severely the authority exercised in the name of their princes, every limitation of that authority seems to them desirable. Never having felt the evils of too weak an executive, the disorders to be apprehended from anarchy make as

yet no impression. The provincial assemblies, or administrations, in other words the popular executive of the provinces, which Turgot had imagined as a means of moderating the *royal legislative* of the court, is now insisted on as a counter security against the monarch, when they shall have established a *democratical legislative*; for you will observe, that the noble and clerical orders are henceforth to be *Vox et preterea nihil*. The king is to be limited to the exact sum needful for his personal expenses. The management of the public debt and revenues to provide for it will be taken entirely out of his hands, and the subsistence of the army is to depend on temporary grants. Hence it must follow, that his negative, in whatever form reserved, will be of little avail.

These are the outlines of the proposed constitution, by which at the same time *Lettres de Cachet* are to be abrogated, and the liberty of the press established. My opinion is that the King, to get fairly out of the scrape in which he finds himself, would subscribe to anything. And truly, from him, little is to be expected in any way. The Queen—hated, humbled, mortified—feels, and feigns, and intrigues, to save some shattered remnants of the royal authority; but to know that she favors a measure is the certain means to frustrate its success.

The Count d'Artois, alike hated, is equally busy, but has neither sense to counsel himself, nor to choose counsellors for himself, much less to counsel others. The nobles look up to him for support, and lean on what they know to be a broken reed, for want of some more solid dependence. In their anguish they curse Necker, who is in fact less the cause than the instrument of their sufferings. His popularity depends now more on the opposition he meets with from one party, than any serious regard of the other. It is the attempt to throw him down, which saves him from falling. He has no longer the preponderating weight in counsel, which a fortnight ago decided everything. If they were not afraid of consequences, he would be dismissed; and on the same principle the King has refused to accept his resignation. If his abilities were equal to

his genius, and he were as much supported by firmness as he is swayed by ambition, he would have had the exalted honor of giving a free constitution to above twenty millions of his fellow creatures; and would have reigned long in their hearts, and received the unanimous applause of posterity. But as it is, he must soon fall; whether his exit will be physical or moral, must depend on events which I cannot foresee. The best chance, which royalty has, is, that popular excesses may alarm. At the rate at which things are now going, the King of France must soon be one of the most limited monarchs in Europe. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO WILLIAM CARMICHAEL.

Paris, July 4th, 1789.

Dear Sir,

I am to reply to three of your letters. Probably I shall make my answer as long as all three of them, and thus in quantity at least be even with you. For the rest, we must take our chance, because when I take up my pen, I know no more what I am going to write, than you will in breaking the seal what your are going to read.

Before all things I am reminded as I go along, that this day, the birthday of our republic, demands our filial acknowledgments. A day now at length auspicious, since by the establishment of our new constitution we have the fair prospect of enjoying those good things, for which we have had so hard a contest. Indulge, I pray you, the effusion of my heart, which gratulates itself on this occasion. Feel, with me, the transports which I cannot but feel, when every letter from America brings confirmation of the public happiness, and announces some additional cement to our national union, or some useful exhibition of national authority. The opposition sickens with mortal symptoms, and I hope and trust, that

our countrymen will have the wisdom to wait, before they attempt amendments, for those lights of experience, which are the only guides that can pretend to infallibility.

You will find herein a letter from our friend Robert Morris to you, which he left open by way of saving himself the trouble of writing to me the public occurrences. In that letter he announces a fact, which we have received from other quarters with some details, that the House of Representatives have resolved to submit the principal direction of the finances to a single man. Through this measure I can feel the pulse of our government. It is vigorous beyond my hopes, far beyond my expectations, and comes up to my wishes. It is the vigor of administration, which can alone consolidate recent establishments. The mass of a nation will always judge rightly of their rulers, by the effects of their measures, although they can never penetrate into the nature of the measures themselves. From the fruit we know the tree, without pretending to investigate the botanical mysteries of vegetation. The extent of our country, and the deliberative freedom of its legislative authority, require an active and vigorous executive. Every subordinate power should be tied to the chief, by those intermediate links of will and pleasure, which, like the elasticity of the arterial system, render sensible the pulsations of the heart at the remotest extremities. For how can the executive be accountable, when its members are not subordinate and obedient to the general volition? But where am I going? I shall, ere I am aware of it, convert a letter of friendship into a political essay. But so it is, that if once the ideas get into that beaten track, where they have been used to travel, they go on, like old cart-horses, with the most determined obstinacy imaginable.

July 10th.

You ask me if Mr Jefferson is gone to America. He is not, but is ready to depart at a moment's warning, having staid here some time expecting to receive his *cong  * by every opportunity, but is still in the same expectation. I conclude,

that it will not be expedited, until the arrangement of the ministerial departments shall have been completed. It occurs to me, while I write, that probably the secretary of foreign affairs will decline acting, until appointed under the new government, for which I can perceive many reasons. It might, for instance, be construed into presumption. It is probable, also, that the question of the *congé* will not be agitated, till another question is determined, viz. who shall act here in the interim; and although I doubt not but the secretary, Mr Short, will be empowered, yet until he is, the other matter will be delayed.

You seem surprised, that our minister here does not mention me in his letters; but *cui bono*? He knows that we correspond together. You suppose that he has introduced me to the *Corps Diplomatique*. In this you are mistaken. I hinted that matter to him shortly after my arrival. He told me they were not worth my acquaintance. I did not press the matter, and I am persuaded he assigned his real reason. I have since thought that it might have been as well otherwise. But on this chapter of acquaintance I have experienced, I believe, the usual fate. I have a set which I have made myself, and these are not, you will easily conceive, among the worst company of Paris. As to the ministerial dinners, I have not been at them. It has never been proposed to me. The ministers, you know, give no invitations themselves, and we are bashful. By the bye, I some time since went and asked a dinner of the Count de Montmorin, who very kindly assured me at parting, that I must in his house consider myself at home; and this, you know, from him is not an unmeaning compliment. I find that you are a favorite of the whole family. I am *tant de bête* that I have not since profited by these kind assurances. But what can one do? Versailles is the most *triste séjour* on earth. And though I am tempted by the strong passion of curiosity to go thither, and attend the debates of the *Etats-Generaux*, I have not yet prevailed on myself to do it. I believe no man ever made less use of strong recommendations to ministerial people. Probably I

am wrong, but I cannot help it. I go soon to England, and on my return I will endeavor to profit more of circumstances.

I have attentively noticed what you say respecting the persons, who have been arrested with you for their libels. Had any conversation arisen on the subject in my presence, I should have given the due explanation; but people here are too much occupied with their own affairs to think of anything else. I am happy to find, that the attempts to overturn the existing administration *chez vous* have proved abortive; because there are many chances against your meeting with such good friends in a new set, as you have in the old. There are great intrigues against the administration here, but hitherto without effect. Before I enter, however, into the detail of occurrences here, I will, in reply to one of your questions, inform you, that I have steadily combatted the violence and excess of those persons, who, either inspired with an enthusiastic love of freedom, or prompted by sinister designs, are disposed to drive everything to extremity. Our American example has done them good; but like all novelties, liberty runs away with their discretion, if they have any. They want an American Constitution, with the exception of a King instead of a President, without reflecting, that they have not American citizens to support that constitution. Mankind see distant things in a false point of light, and judge more or less favorably than they ought; this is an old observation; another, perhaps as old, but which all are not in the position to feel, is, that we try everything by the standard of preconceived notions; so that there is an impossibility almost of knowing by description a distant people or country. Whoever, therefore, desires to apply, in the practical science of government, those rules and forms which prevail and succeed in a foreign country, must fall into the same pedantry with our young scholars, just fresh from the university, who would fain bring everything to the Roman standard.

Different constitutions of government are necessary to the different societies on the face of this planet. Their difference of position is, in itself, a powerful cause, as also their manners,

their habits. The scientific tailor, who should cut after Grecian or Chinese models, would not have many customers, either in London or Paris; and those who look to America for their political forms are not unlike those tailors in the island of Laputa, who, as Gulliver tells us, always take measure with a quadrant. He tells us, indeed, what we should naturally expect from such a process, that the people are seldom fitted.

And now for occurrences here, after a digression which is not of the shortest. The King, who long ago declared for the people, has since been wavering. He is an honest man, and wishes really to do good; but he has neither genius nor education to show the way toward that good which he desires. In the contest between the representatives of the people, and of the nobles, he has, by those about him, been induced to give support to the latter; but he came forward too late, and not in the proper manner. The result is, that he has retreated, and the nobles have been obliged to give way. In fact, this country has undergone a great change unobservedly. The *Noblesse*, who at this day possess neither the force, the wealth, nor the talents of the nation, have rather opposed pride than argument to their assailants. Hugging the dear privileges of centuries long elapsed, they have clamored about the court, while their adversaries have possessed themselves fully of the public confidence everywhere. Knowing and feeling the force of that situation, they have advanced with a boldness, which to those unacquainted with all the facts, has looked like temerity. But this hardihood has been imposing.

Those who are at the head of the opposition to them are not possessed of talents or of virtue. The chief has not even courage, without which, you know, that in revolutions, there is nothing. The French troops, as far as it can be ascertained, would not serve against their countrymen; and the foreign troops are not sufficiently numerous to make any serious impression. The people of this city are going, (by that invisible instinct which produces in every animal the conduct pecu-

liar to his situation,) in the same road, which marked the aurora of American opposition. Three months ago the sight of a soldier excited awe. Now they speak of attacking whole regiments, and in effect there are not unfrequently some scuffles with the foreign troops. This opinion, which is everything, becomes daily fortified.

While I write, I consider the sovereignty of this country as being effectually lodged in the hands of the *Assemblée Nationale*, for you will observe, that this name is assumed instead of *Etats-Generaux*, which is tantamount to an American *legislature* resolving itself into a *convention*. They mean immediately to form a constitution, and I have no doubt that they will obtain the King's consent. The partizans of the ancient establishments have contrived to have a very large body of troops assembled in this neighborhood, but if I conjecture rightly those troops will soon be dispersed. The National Assembly have already marked their disapprobation; but the matter will not stop here, and sooner or later the King must send them away. Indeed, I am induced to believe that this measure will cause the kingdom to be cleared of foreign troops, for not being able to rely on the French regiments, they have selected principally the foreigners. The probable object of those who are at the bottom of the business, is, to surprise some order from his Majesty's fears, which are now continually excited, so that he is constantly the sport of apprehensions.

But they have a more difficult and dangerous business, than they are at all aware of. The Assembly have determined, that all taxes shall cease when they separate, except such as they may continue or impose. This provides for as long a term of existence as they may choose to take, and if dispersed, France will certainly refuse to pay. An army will never break a general combination to that effect, so that, either sooner or later, they must submit, and every show of authority now will weaken it without producing any other effect.

Such, then, is the state of this country, in which I think the crisis is past without having been perceived; and now a

free constitution will be the certain result. If they have the good sense to give the nobles, as such, some share in the national authority, that constitution will probably endure; but otherwise, it will degenerate into a pure monarchy, or become a vast republic, a democracy. Can that last? I think not. I am sure not; unless the whole people are changed. In any event, however, of the business, it bids fair to change the political face of Europe. But whither am I going? I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Dieppe, July 31st, 1789.

Dear Sir,

I had the honor to write to you on the twenty-ninth of April last. I shall not trouble you with a recital of events, which Mr Jefferson has, I know, communicated to the office of foreign affairs. But being now here on my way to London, and finding a vessel bound directly to New York, I take the opportunity to send some tables, which contain the political, military, pecuniary, and commercial state of this country. I believe them to be tolerably authentic as far as they go.

I will also communicate a matter, which Mr Jefferson was not yet informed of, and which I could not tell him, because I was forbidden to mention it to any person here. You know, I dare say, that the Count de Moustiers has his *congé*. His successor will be Colonel Ternant. At first, in the character of *Chargé des Affaires*, and when M. de Moustiers is otherwise placed, it is highly probable that Ternant may be made Minister; but that will depend on the situation of the court at the time, so that *there* I only state probability. As to the other, you may rely on it, because my intelligence I know to be good. The important trait in this appointment is, that he is named as a person who will be agreeable to us.

You may rely, also, on what I am about to mention, but

which I pray you not to disclose. It is known to very few in this country, and may, perhaps, as it ought, be buried in oblivion. The King has actually formed the design of going off to Spain. Whether the measures set on foot to dissuade him will have, as I hope, the desired effect, time only can discover. His fears govern him absolutely, and they have of late been most strongly excited. He is a well meaning man, but extremely weak, and probably these circumstances will in every event secure him from personal injury. An able man would not have fallen into his situation, but I think that no ability can now extricate him. He must float along the current of events, being absolutely and entirely a cypher. If, however, he should fly, it would not be easy to predict the consequences, for this country is at present as near to anarchy as society can approach without dissolution. There are some able men in the National Assembly, yet the best heads among them would not be injured by experience, and unfortunately there are great numbers who, with much imagination, have little knowledge, judgment, or reflection. You may consider the revolution as complete, that is to say, the authority of the King and of the nobility is completely subdued; yet I tremble for the constitution. They have all that romantic spirit, and all those romantic ideas of government, which happily for America we were cured of before it was too late. They are advancing rapidly. But I must check myself, or my reflections will occupy too much space both for you and for me.

One of the last persons I saw in Paris was M. de Lafayette. He had promised to trust me with a letter for you, but he must be excused, for he is as busy as a man can be. Not long since, speaking to him on his own subject, I told him some hints I had given, tending to make him governor of the Isle of France, which you know includes Paris. He declared that the command of the military in that city only was the utmost of his wishes. That he was satiated with power. He had his sovereign, during the late procession to Paris, completely within his authority. He had marched him where he pleased, measured

out the degree of applause he should receive as he pleased, and if he pleased could have detained him prisoner. All this is strictly true. He commanded on that day at least eighty thousand men, who, during the King's progress through them to the Hotel de Ville, shouted *Vive la Nation*, and only on his return cried *Vive la Roi*.

I do not know whether you will be informed of the critical situation in which things were placed, just before the last ministry were turned out and the old one restored. My authority is very good, but yet I will not vouch for the truth. It was resolved to reduce Paris by famine, to take two hundred of the States-General prisoners, to dissolve that assembly, and to govern in the old-fashioned way. All this you will say was madness, and therefore improbable. But was it not equally mad to drive away Necker, and change the ministry at the time and in the manner, which were chosen for that purpose? The men, weak enough for the one, were certainly mad enough for the other. Two German regiments, which were to be employed, were regaled by the Queen in the Orangerie at Versailles. They received promises and largesses, and were prevailed on to shout *Vive la Reine, Vive le Comte d'Artois, Vive la Duchesse de Polignac*. Afterwards their music played for hours under her Majesty's window. The Mareschal de Broglie endeavored, at the same time, to conciliate the artillery. But it was at length discovered, that, though the troops would shout and sing, yet they would not fight against their countrymen. All which might have been known long ago. At the moment when their intrigue was carrying on by the court, the *Gardes du Corps* and *Gardes Françaises* combined to defend the members of the National Assembly. I pass over those facts, which you cannot but know, to mention in one word, that the whole army of France have declared for liberty; and that one reason why his Majesty has not taken the steps above mentioned, is, that he does not know a single regiment that would obey him.

Adieu, my dear Sir. I write this letter in much hurry, and

after much fatigue. Excuse in it everything inaccurate or inelegant, and pardon it, on the score of that sincere and affectionate respect, with which I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

GEORGE WASHINGTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

New York, Oct. 13th, 1789.

Dear Sir,

In my first moments of leisure I acknowledge the receipt of your several favors.

To thank you for the interesting communications contained in those letters, and for the pains you have taken to procure me a watch, is all, or nearly all, I shall attempt in this letter; for I could only repeat things, were I to set about it, which I have reason to believe have been regularly communicated to you in detail, at the periods which gave birth to them. It may not, however, be displeasing to you to hear in one word, that the national government is organized, and as far as *my* information goes, to the satisfaction of all parties; that opposition to it is either no more, or hides its head; that it is hoped and expected it will take strong root; and that the non-acceding States will very soon become members of the union. No doubt is entertained of North Carolina; nor would there be any of Rhode Island, had not the majority of those people bid adieu, long since, to every principle of honor, common sense, and honesty. A material change however has taken place, it is said, at the late election of representatives, and confident assurances are given, from that circumstance, of better dispositions in their legislature at its next session, now about to be held.

The revolution which has been effected in France is of so wonderful a nature, that the mind can hardly realize the fact. If it ends as our last accounts to the first of August predict, that nation will be the most powerful and happy in Europe; but I fear, though it has gone triumphantly through the first

paroxysm, it is not the last it has to encounter before matters are finally settled. In a word, the revolution is of too great a magnitude to be effected in so short a space, and with the loss of so little blood. The mortification of the King, the intrigues of the Queen, and the discontent of the princes and noblesse, will foment divisions, if possible, in the National Assembly, and they will unquestionably avail themselves of every *faux pas* in the formation of the constitution, if they do not give a more open, active opposition. In addition to these, the licentiousness of the people on one hand, and sanguinary punishments on the other, will alarm the best disposed friends to the measure, and contribute not a little to the overthrow of their object. Great temperance, firmness, and foresight are necessary in the movements of that body. To forbear running from one extreme to another is no easy matter, and should this be the case, rocks and shelves, not visible at present, may wreck the vessel, and give a higher toned despotism than the one which existed before. I am, dear Sir, &c.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

TO JOHN PAUL JONES, AT WARSAW.

Paris, November 8th, 1789.

My Dear Sir,

I received a few days past your kind letter from Warsaw, without date. The enclosures shall be applied as you desire, both in this city and in London, to which latter place I expect soon to repair. I have delivered your message to the Countess de Segur, and desired Mr Short to send the bust, which he has promised, and presents his compliments to you.

Mr Jefferson is, you know, departed, with intention to return next spring. All the accounts received from our country are flattering. Freedom, order, and justice are established. Abundance reigns, and there is every just hope of future prosperity. As yet, the government have not turned their attention to na-

val affairs, which, though perhaps more necessary, are less urgent than many others. I do not think that establishments of that kind will take place for two or three years to come. Consequently, any views which you may have directed towards that object can be for some time suspended.

You ask me, my dear friend, to give you my advice. This is a task both difficult and delicate. A journey to this city can, I think, produce nothing but the expense attending it; for neither pleasure nor advantage can be expected here, by one of your profession in particular; and, except that it is a more dangerous residence than many others, I know of nothing which may serve to you as an inducement.

Whether the Turk will be able to make battle for another campaign seems to be considered as uncertain. But from the troubles in Brabant, and from the necessity of supporting Sweden through the contest she has been led to engage in, I conclude that peace will not take place this winter; and if not, the Baltic will witness some warm work next year. The cabinet of St Petersburg must know what can be depended on before the first day of January next, and as it is possible that Sweden will get help, (perhaps from Holland,) everything must depend on striking early. Hence I conclude, that the ball will be opened in April next, and if you can devise any good plan, it will be well to communicate it to the Empress early. I am not sufficiently master of facts to give hints, but I should suppose that a manœuvre towards the mouth of the Baltic, so as to cover any assistance that Denmark may feel inclined to give, and prevent the junction of any aid sent from the southward, might be no unwise procedure.

I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, January 22d, 1790.

Dear Sir,

Yesterday I went to dine with the Count de Montmorin,* and expressed to him my wish that France might seize the present moment to establish a liberal system of commercial policy for her colonies. I observed, that her interest was deeply at stake, because America could always dispose of the Islands, and would naturally wish to see them in possession of that power, under whose government they would be most advantageous to her. That nothing could tend so much to make the United States desirous of an alliance with Britain, as to exclude them from a free trade with the French colonies. That, if the metropolis wishes to preserve the affection of her distant subjects, and to derive from them the greatest commercial benefit, she ought to suffer them to draw their subsistence from that quarter, where they can obtain it most cheaply. He assured me, that he was fully of my opinion; said that our position rendered it proper to make in our favor an exception from their general system respecting other nations, and that he hoped, within a fortnight, something might be done. But he lamented, as he had done before, that they have no chief minister, and consequently no fixed plan nor principles. I shall see him again before I depart, and also Monsieur de la Luzerne, within whose department this matter regularly lies. He is an adherent to the exclusive system, which is unfortunate.

In the National Assembly, also, there is a considerable difficulty. Among the most violent of the violent party, are some representatives of cities on the western coasts of this kingdom, where the chief commerce is with the Islands; and those

* Count Montmorin was at this time Minister of Foreign Affairs. During the American Revolution, he was the French Ambassador in Madrid, and well disposed towards the interests of the United States.

who wish for the closest union with America, do not wish to offend these gentlemen; and therefore are desirous of waving the matter at present. For my own, I am very desirous that the business should be put in train, at least. If successful, so much the better; but at any rate, it will give an alarm on the other side of the channel. If either of these rival nations sets the example, the other will soon follow; and although it is not very clear, that the actings and doings of the *Assemblée Nationale* in general will long endure, yet whatever they grant to us in this particular business, those who come after them will be fearful of retracting. Under these impressions, for a long time past, I have been endeavoring to smooth the way towards our object, and I believe in the success. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, January 22d, 1790.

Dear Sir,

In another letter of this date, I have mentioned a part of yesterday's conversation with the Count de Montmorin. That part of it, which I am now to communicate, is for yourself alone. As Monsieur de Lafayette had asked me some days ago, who should be sent to replace the Comte de Moustiers, and upon my answering with great indifference, that it might be whom he pleased, had asked my opinion of Colonel Ternant, I told the Count de Montmorin this circumstance; to which he replied, that he had communicated his intention to Monsieur de Lafayette some time since, in consequence of the intimacy which has long subsisted between them. I asked him if he would permit me to mention it to you. The idea gave him pleasure, and he told me that he should consider it as a very great kindness, and particularly if through the same channel he could learn whether that appointment would be agreeable to you. This

is you know a compliment, which the most respectable courts on this side of the Atlantic usually pay to each other. It is not without use, and on the present occasion is not a mere compliment, because Monsieur de Montmorin is sincerely desirous of cultivating a good understanding with the United States.

It is not impossible that he may retreat from his present office ; but he will I think in that case be appointed Governor to the children of France, and his opinions, while about the court, will have weight, for many reasons ; amongst others, because they deserve it. In talking over the deplorable situation to which this kingdom is reduced, I told him that I saw no means of establishing peace at home, but by making war abroad. He replied that he thought with me in part, viz. that an offensive war might be useful, but that he thought a defensive war must prove ruinous. That this last seemed the more likely to happen, and that in either case the state of the finances was alarming. I observed, that ability in that department might restore it, even during a war ; that nothing could revive credit without the re-establishment of executive authority, and that nothing could effect that re-establishment but a general sense of the necessity. Upon this, he lamented the want of a chief minister, who might embrace the great whole of public business. He owns himself unequal to the task, and too indolent into the bargain.

Our friend Lafayette burns with desire to be at the head of an army in Flanders, and drive the Stadtholder into a ditch. He acts now a splendid, but dangerous part. Unluckily, he has given in to measures, as to the constitution, which he does not heartily approve, and he heartily approves many things which experience will demonstrate to be injurious. While all is in confusion here, the revolt of Austrian Flanders, and the troubles excited in Poland by the agency of Prussia, give every reason to suppose that the King of Sweden will be vigorously supported ; so that provided the Turk has but a sufficient share of obstinacy to bear a little more beating, the scale,

according to human probabilities, must turn against Austria and Prussia, who are the allies of France. Great Britain is, as yet, no otherwise engaged than as an eventual party; and, according to the best opinion which my judgment can form, upon the information I have been able to obtain, the Premier of that country can, to use the words of Mr Addison, 'rise in the whirlwind and direct the storm.' A person, however, on whose knowledge I have some reliance, assures me that Mr Pitt, engrossed by borough politics and ignorant of continental affairs, takes no part in them, but what he is absolutely forced into, and I am inclined to believe that there is some truth in that assertion. Accept I pray the assurances of that sincere esteem with which I am yours, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, January 24th, 1790.

Dear Sir,

It gave me very sincere pleasure to learn from *you* the good tidings, which you communicate respecting our new form of government. I know that you are not liable to the dupery of false hopes and groundless expectations; and therefore I am confirmed in the opinion I have invariably entertained, that the new constitution is such a plain, calm, sensible appeal to the interest, feelings, and common sense of our countrymen, that it must, by its own intrinsic weight, bear down all opposition. I have from time to time received very great pleasure, at the developement of its principles by the legislature, which in my opinion does them the greatest honor. They have far, very far outgone my expectations, and even come up, not only to my hopes, but to my very wishes.

I have not unfrequently brought myself to share in the pleasure you must feel, in the consciousness of your own useful agency. Certainly it is the sublimest sentiment of the human

heart, to know that we make others happy ; and more especially those whom we love. You have too much good sense not to know, that no person but yourself could have obtained that full confidence needful to the due establishment of the executive authority, which certainly is the key-stone in the great arch of empire. I doubt, also, whether any other could so universally have called forth into action the talents and virtues of America. Let me add, what I have mentioned to you on other occasions, and which I would not have mentioned, did I not know it to be true, your knowledge of human character is a gift inestimable to our country on the present occasion. I hope in God, my dear Sir, that you may long continue to preside, and that not only you, but all who succeed you, may be assisted by counsellors as able and as honest, as those who now fill the different seats in Congress. The prospect of public felicity, which must be the result, swells my bosom with delight. Oh my country, how happy ' didst thou but know thine own blessedness.

Your sentiments on the revolution effecting here, I believe to be perfectly just, because they perfectly accord with my own, and that is, you know, the only standard which Heaven has given us by which to judge. The king is in effect a prisoner at Paris, and obeys entirely the National Assembly. This assembly may be divided into three parts ; one, called the *Aristocrats*, consists of the high clergy, the members of the law, (note, these are not the lawyers,) and such of the nobility as think they ought to form a separate order. Another, which has no name, but which consists of all sorts of people, really friends to a good free government. The third is composed of what is called here the *Enragés*, that is, the madmen. These are the most numerous, and are of that class which in America is known by the name of pettifogging lawyers ; together with a host of curates, and many of those persons who, in all revolutions, throng to the standard of change, because they are not well.

This last party is in close alliance with the populace here, and derives from that circumstance very great authority. They have already unhinged everything, and according to custom on such occasions the torrent rushes on irresistible, until it shall have wasted itself. The Aristocrats are without a leader, and without any plan or councils as yet, but ready to throw themselves into the arms of any one who shall offer. The middle party, who mean well, have unfortunately acquired their ideas of government from books, and are admirable fellows upon paper; but as it happens, somewhat unfortunately, that the men who live in the world are very different from those who dwell in the heads of philosophers, it is not to be wondered at, if the systems taken out of books are fit for nothing but to be put into books again.

Marmontel is the only man I have met with, among their Literati, who seems truly to understand the subject. For the rest, they *discuss* nothing in their Assembly. One large half of the time is spent in hallooing and bawling. The manner of speaking to a question is as follows. Such as intend to hold forth write their names on a tablet kept for that purpose, and are heard in the order that their names are written down, if the others will hear them, which very often they refuse to do, but keep up a continual uproar till the orator leaves the pulpit. Each man permitted to speak delivers the result of his lucubrations, so that the opposing parties fire off their cartridges, and it is a million to one if their missile arguments happen to meet. As to the arguments themselves, you will observe that it is a usual compliment of the Assembly to order them printed; therefore, there is as much attention paid, at least, to make them sound well and look well, as to convey instruction or produce conviction.

But there is another ceremony which the arguments go through, and which does not fail to affect the form, at least, and perhaps the substance. They are read beforehand in a small society of young men and women, and generally the fair friend of the speaker is one, or else the fair whom he means to

make his friend, and the society very politely give their approbation, unless the lady who gives the tone to that circle chances to reprehend something, which is of course altered if not amended. Do not suppose that I am playing the traveller. I have assisted at some of these readings, and will now give you an anecdote from one of them. It was at Madame de Staël's, the daughter of M. Necker. She is a woman of wonderful wit, and above vulgar prejudices of every kind. Her house is a kind of temple of Apollo, where the men of wit and fashion are collected twice a week at supper, and once at dinner, and sometimes more frequently. The Count de Clermont-Tonnerre, one of their greatest orators, read to us a very pathetic oration, and the object was to show that no penalties are the legal compensations for injuries and crimes; the man who is hanged, having by that event paid his debt to the society, ought not to be held in dishonor; and in like manner, he who has been condemned for seven years to be flogged in the galleys should, when he had served out his apprenticeship, be received again into good company as if nothing had happened. You smile; but observe the extreme to which the matter was carried the other way. Dishonoring thousands for the guilt of one has so shocked the public sentiment, as to render this extreme fashionable. The oration was very fine, very sentimental, very pathetic, and the style harmonious. Shouts of applause and full approbation.

When this was pretty well over, I told him that his speech was extremely eloquent, but that his principles were not very solid. Universal surprise! A very few remarks changed the face of things. The position was universally condemned, and he left the room. I need not add, that as yet it has never been delivered in the assembly. And yet it was of the kind, which produces a decree by acclamation; for sometimes an orator gets up in the midst of another deliberation, makes a fine discourse, and closes with a good snug resolution which is carried with a huzza. Thus, in considering a plan for a national bank proposed by M. Necker, one of them took it into his head to

move, that every member should give his silver buckles, which was agreed to at once, and the honorable mover laid his upon the table, after which the business went on again.

It is very difficult to guess whereabouts the flock will settle, when it flies so wild ; but as far as it is possible to guess, at present, this (late) kingdom will be cast into a congeries of little democracies, laid out, not according to the rivers, mountains, &c. but with the square and compass, according to latitude and longitude ; and as the provinces had anciently different laws called *coutumes*, and as the clippings and parings of several different provinces must fall together within some of the new divisions, I think such fermenting matter must give them a kind of political cholic. Their *Assemblée Nationale* will be something like the Old Congress, and the King will be called executive magistrate. As yet they have been busily engaged in pillaging the present occupant of his authority ; how much they will leave him, will depend upon the chapter of accidents. I believe it will be very little ; but little or much, the perspective of such a King, and such an Assembly, brings to my mind a saying which Shakspeare has put into the mouth of an old soldier, upon hearing that Lepidus, one of the famous Triumvirate, was dead. ‘ So, the poor third is up. World, thou hast but a pair of chops, and throw between them all the food thou may’st, they needs must grind each other.’

At present the people are fully determined to support the Assembly ; and although there are some discontents, I do not believe that anything very serious, as yet, exists in the style of opposition. Indeed, it would be wonderful if there should ; for hitherto an extension of privileges, and a remission of taxes to the lower class, have marked every stage of their progress. Besides, the love of novelty is a great sweetener in revolutions. But the time will come when this novelty will be over and all its charms gone. In lieu of the taxes remitted, other taxes must be laid, for the public burthen must be borne. The elected administrators must, then, either indulge their electors, which will be ruinous to the *Fisc*, or in urging the collection of

taxes, displace their constituents. In all probability, there will be a little of both. Hence must arise bickerings and heart-burnings among the different districts, and a great languor throughout the kingdom. As the revenue must fall short of calculation in point of time, if not in amount, (and that is the same thing where revenue is concerned,) it will follow, that either the interest of the public debt will not be regularly paid, or that the various departments will be starved; probably a little of both. Hence will result a loss of public credit, and therewith much injury to commerce and manufactures, operating a farther decrease of the means of revenue, and much debility as to the exterior operations of the kingdom.

At this moment the discontented spirits will find congenial matter in abundance to work upon; and from that period, all the future is involved in the mist of conjecture. If the reigning prince were not the small beer character that he is, there can be but little doubt, that watching events, and making a tolerable use of them, he would regain his authority; but what will you have from a creature who, situated as he is, eats, and drinks, and sleeps well, and laughs, and is as merry a grig as lives? The idea that they will give him some money, which he can economize, and that he will have no trouble in governing, contents him entirely. Poor man! he little thinks how unstable is his situation. He is beloved, but it is not with the sort of love which a monarch should inspire. It is that kind of good natured pity, which one feels for a led captive. There is, besides, no possibility of serving him; for at the slightest show of opposition, he gives up everything and every person.

As to his ministers, the Count de Montmorin has more understanding than people in general imagine, and he means well, very well. But he means it feebly. He is a good easy kind of man, one who would make an excellent peace minister in quiet times; but he wants the vigor of mind needful for great occasions. The Count de la Luzerne is an indolent, pleasant companion, a man of honor, and as obsti-

nate as you please ; but he has somewhat of the creed of General Gates, that the world does a great part of its own business, without the aid of those who are at the head of affairs. The success of such men depends very much upon the run of the dice. The Count de St Priest is the only man among them, who has what they call *caractère*, which answers to our idea of firmness, joined to some activity. But a person who knows him pretty well, (which I do not,) assures me, that he is mercenary and false hearted. If so, he cannot possess much good sense, whatever may be his share of genius or talents. Monsieur de Latour-Dupin, the minister at war, whom I am also unacquainted with, is said to be no great things in any respect. M. Necker was frightened by the *Enragés* into the acceptance of him, instead of the Marquis de Montesquiou, who has a considerable share of talents, and a great deal of method. Montesquiou is of course at present the enemy of M. Necker, having been his friend.

As to M. Necker, he is one of those people, who has obtained a much greater reputation than he had any right to. His enemies say, that as a banker, he acquired his fortune by means, which to say the least were indelicate, and they mention instances. But in this country, everything is so much exaggerated, that nothing is more useful than a little skepticism. M. Necker, in his public administration, has always been honest and disinterested ; which proves well, I think, for his former private conduct ; or else it proves that he has more vanity than cupidity. Be that as it may, an unspotted integrity as minister, and serving at his own expense, in an office which others seek for the purpose of enriching themselves, have acquired for him very deservedly much confidence. Add to this, that his writings on finance teem with that sort of sensibility, which makes the fortune of modern romances, and which is exactly suited to this lively nation, who love to read but hate to think. Hence his reputation. He is a man of genius, and his wife is a woman of sense ; but neither of them have talents, or rather the talents of a great

minister. His education as a banker has taught him to make tight bargains, and put him upon his guard against projects. But though he understands man, as a covetous creature, he does not understand mankind; a defect which is remediless. He is utterly ignorant of politics, by which I mean politics in the great sense, or that sublime science, which embraces for its object the happiness of mankind. Consequently, he neither knows what constitution to form, nor how to obtain the consent of others to such as he wishes. From the moment of convening the States-General, he has been afloat upon the wide ocean of incidents.

But what is most extraordinary is, that M. Necker is a very poor financier. This, I know, will sound like heresy in the ears of most people, but it is true. The plans he has proposed are feeble and inept. Hitherto he has been supported by borrowing from the *Caisse d'Escompte*, which, (being by means of what they call here an *arrêt de surséance* secured from all prosecutions,) has lent him a sum in their paper exceeding the totality of their capital, by about four millions sterling. Last autumn he came forward to the *Assemblée* with a dreadful tale of woe, at the fag end of which was a tax upon every member of the community of a fourth of his revenue, and this he declared to be needful for saving the state. His enemies adopted it, (declaring what is very true, that it is a wretched, impracticable expedient,) in the hope that he and his scheme would fall together. This *Assemblée*, this patriotic band, took in the lump the minister's proposition, because of their confidence and the confidence of the people in him as they said; but in fact, because they would not risk the unpopularity of a tax.

The plan thus adopted, M. Necker, to escape the snare which he had nearly got taken in, altered his tax into what they call the *patriotic contribution*. By this, every man is to declare, if he pleases, at what he pleases to estimate his annual income, and to pay one fourth of it in three years. You will easily suppose that this fund was unproductive, and notwith-

standing the imminent danger of the state, we are as yet without any aid from the *contribution patriotique*.

His next scheme was that of a National Bank, or at least an extension of the *Caisse d'Escompte*. It has been variously modelled since, and many capital objections removed ; but at last it is good for nothing, and so it will turn out. At present it is just beginning. By way of giving some base to the present operation, it is proposed and determined to sell about ten or twelve millions sterling of the crown and church lands, both of which are, by resolution of the *Assemblée*, declared to belong to the nation ; but as it is clear that these lands will not sell well just now, they have appointed a treasurer to receive what they will sell for hereafter, and they issue a kind of order upon this treasurer, which is to be called an *Assignat*, and is to be paid, (out of these sales) one, two, and three years hence. They expect that on these *Assignats* they can borrow money to free the engagements of the *Caisse d'Escompte*, and they are at the same time to pay some of the more pressing debts, with the same *Assignats*.

Now this plan must fail, as follows. First, there will be some doubt about the title to these lands, at least till the revolution is completed. Secondly, the representative of the land must always (for a reason which will presently appear) sell for less than a representative of money, and therefore, until public confidence is so far restored as that the five per cents are above par, these *Assignats* bearing five per cent must be below par. Money, therefore, cannot be raised upon them but at a considerable discount. Thirdly, the lands to be disposed of must sell a great deal below their value, for there is not money to buy them in this country ; and the proof is, that they never obtained money on loan at the legal interest but always upon a premium sufficient to draw it from the employments of commerce and manufactures, and as the revolution has greatly lessened the mass of money, the effect of the scarcity must be greater.

But farther, there is a solecism in the plan which escapes

most of them, and which is, nevertheless, very palpable. The value of lands in Europe is, you know, estimated by the income. To dispose of public lands is to sell public revenue; and therefore taking the legal interest at five per cent, lands renting for 100 livres ought to sell for 2000, but they expect that these lands will sell for 3000, and that thereby, not only public credit will be restored, but a great saving will be made, as the 3000 will redeem an interest of 150. It is, however, an indisputable fact, that public credit being established, the stocks are worth more than land of equal income, and for three reasons; first, that there is no trouble whatever in the management; secondly, there is no danger of bad crops and taxes; and thirdly, they can be disposed of at a moment's warning, if the owner wants money, and be as readily repurchased when it suits his convenience. If, therefore, the public credit be restored, and there be a surplus sum of ten to twelve millions to be invested, and if such large sales (contrary to custom) should not from the amount affect the price, still the lands must go cheaper than the stocks, and consequently the interest bought will be smaller than the revenue sold.

Having thus given you a very rude sketch of the men and the measures of this country, I see and feel that it is time to conclude. I sincerely wish I could say that there are able men at hand to take the helm, should the present pilots abandon the ship. But I have great apprehensions as to those who may succeed. The present set must wear out in the course of the year, and most of them would be glad to get fairly out of the scrape at present; but it is alike dangerous to stay or to go, and they must patiently wait the breath of the *Assemblée* and follow as it blows. The new order of things cannot endure. I hope it may be mended, but fear it may be changed. All Europe, just now, is like a mine ready to explode; and if this winter does not produce peace, next summer will behold a wider extension of the war. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

Paris, January 31st, 1790.

Dear Hamilton,

I did expect that in congratulating you, which I do most sincerely, upon your appointment, I should have communicated a matter which would have administered much ease and convenience to the affairs of your department. I learn this morning that these expectations are frustrated from a quarter, and in a manner, which would excite my surprise, had I not long since acquired the habit of wondering at nothing. I will tell you a plain story.

M. Necker, pressed for money, had listened to overtures for selling the debt of the United States, and mentioned the matter to some members of the National Assembly, by which means it became known to the principal Americans, and friends of America here. I own that upon the first mention of the matter, it appeared to me a thing of indifference, and so I expressed myself. Our duty is to pay to such creditors as may possess the demand. But further information placed the affair in a different point of light. It appeared that the offer was for a small part, at a great discount; and that the terms of the bargain were to be debated in the National Assembly, and consequently our reputation sported with. Mr Short did everything in his power, but having no pointed instructions, could only express the result of his own judgment and feelings. But the minister was pressed for money, and he had the offer of money. Under these circumstances, in connexion with a society of friends to America, I made M. Necker an offer, such as in my conception was honorable to France, to America, and to the parties. This proposition, (after stating the amount of the principal and interest which would be due on the first of January 1790, and considering that as a new capital on which the interest was to run,) contains the following terms. ‘ *On propose de l’acquérir du gouvernement, et à cet effet de l’acquitter en entier par des rentes per-*

pétuelles de la France montantcs à la même somme.' This payment was to be made in the year 1790 and 1791; consequently, so far as France is concerned, the offer went to a full, complete, and entire payment, and that at a much earlier period than is stipulated by the terms of the loans themselves. To this was added a further offer, in case the situation of affairs in this kingdom should require it, in the following terms; '*On se chargera de solder en argent la moitié de la dite rente au prix courant des effets royaux.*' This part of the offer has no other merit than to secure to the minister the sale of the French effects, if he thought proper, and is therefore a matter rather of convenience than advantage. I communicated this plan, beforehand, to Mr Short, and to the Marquis de Lafayette, who both considered it as an excellent means of saving at the same time the honor and interest of America, while it furnished a useful resource to France. I showed it also to Monsieur de Montmorin, who, having well weighed and considered it, assured me that he most heartily approved it, and would do everything in his power to secure the success.

In the supposition that this plan were adopted here, application was to be made through you to the United States to pay the amount of this debt in obligations for current guilders, calculating the exchange at par; those obligations to bear five per cent interest, and to be paid in instalments, the first of which to commence five years hence. Consequently, as the society was to bear all the charges of negotiation, &c. &c. it follows clearly, that the United States would have obtained the needful time required for their accommodation without a farthing of expense, and without the pain of soliciting it from this Court. It was therefore equally honorable and useful for them. It was honorable also to the parties. First, because they became eminently useful to the societies of which they are respectively members; and secondly, because the advantage, if any, which they were to derive would result merely from a careful and industrious attention to the variations of the exchange and fluctuations in the effects, and from the use of their funds and

credit to make investments at the proper times and seasons, which, as far as the sum of forty millions of livres and upwards can go, must necessarily have sustained the value of the stocks here. And you will observe that this was clearly stated and understood.

The proposition was delivered to M. Necker on the fifth of December. You will observe, that in framing it we counted upon the aid of money-lenders in Holland; and, in preference to others, upon the commissioners of the United States. We learned, however, that these gentlemen had, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Mr Jacob Van Staphorst, who has a real and warm regard for America, joined with those who made the offer to M. Necker. Through the channel that brought us this information, an interview was brought about between Monsieur de la Chaise and Mr Van Staphorst, charged with the final proposition to M. Necker and me. I told those gentlemen, that I was convinced their offer could not be accepted, (by the bye, M. Necker had told me that the sum offered was not sufficient,) and that, if accepted by the minister, it could not be adopted by the Assembly, and that they risked doing great injury to America, without any advantage to themselves; that I would communicate to them an offer I had made, and which I had great reason to believe would be adopted; that I would offer them an interest in it, or a commission, at their option; that if they should not approve of holding a concern, I would then lie still, and let them make the most of their plans without opposition, but asked the assurance on the part of themselves and of their principals, (those whom they represented) that if they found their own scheme impracticable, and did not choose to adventure with me, they should only not oppose. This being solemnly promised, I stated the matter to them at large, and they came so fully into my views, as to withhold the proposition they were directed to make, and send an express on the subject to Amsterdam.

The interview was on the eleventh of December, in the evening. Some further discussions were needful, which we had the

next day. I avoided going to M. Necker's, because I was to do nothing which would defeat their plan. On the twenty-sixth, Mr Hubbard, partner of the house of Staphorst, arrived charged to make their offer, with a budget of reasons in support of it. This offer was to purchase the 6,000,000 at a discount of about eleven per cent. It was made immediately; and on the morning of the 28th he called on me, in company with Mr Van Staphorst. I had been repeatedly assured from different quarters that M. Necker was ready to treat with me, but I had not put myself in his way. The conversation with Mr Hubbard was not very long. I heard what he had to say, and replied with great precision, but so as to change entirely his opinion. You will not wonder at this, when I tell you the purport of the objections he had brought forward; first, that it was too profitable to the parties; secondly, too burdensome to France; and thirdly, might injure the credit of America by selling the obligations too low. To the first, I replied by a smile, and the assurance, that I never expected such an objection from Holland. This disconcerted him. To the second I answered, that M. Necker understood his own business, and might safely be trusted in making a bargain; but I showed him further that the bargain was a good one. To the last I made the answer, which I am sure you have already made in your own mind, viz. that if the commissioners of the United States could safely be trusted in making negotiations, where the loss was to be borne by their employers, *à fortiori* might they be trusted where the loss was to be borne by themselves.

As all this was merely ostensible, I pressed him hard for the real reasons, but could get nothing more than assurances that there were no other than those above mentioned. As these were clearly refuted, of course he acknowledged himself converted; but Hudibras has very well observed that,

‘Who’s convinced against his will,
Is of the same opinion still.’

A more effectual change was wrought by M. Necker, who, on the second of this month, refused their offer. On the morning of the third, Mr Hubbard called and informed me of this, and in the afternoon of the fifth he set off for Amsterdam, apparently desirous of bringing all his friends into my views. The business went on but slowly in Amsterdam; and Mr Jacob Van Staphorst was amused from time to time, and amused me with the expectation that each succeeding post would bring their definitive answer; but this morning he tells me, with very sincere regret, what has been done. The letter to you on this subject I have read, and will make a few remarks upon it, but shall not be very precise, perhaps, as it is only from memory of what it contained that I write.

The idea of an enormous profit, admitting for a moment that such were to accrue, would hardly have been with them what *Candid* calls *the sufficient reason* for refusal, although perhaps it might have been for acceptance. But you can judge of the extent of that profit, and you will with me smile at the absurdity of connecting with such profit a sacrifice in the price of American obligations, on the vending of which at or near par, the profit must certainly depend. There is something else which perhaps is more ridiculous still, viz. that the United States, whose obligations belonging to numerous individuals are daily sold on the change of Amsterdam, should apprehend an injury to their credit from trusting a farther negotiation to persons, whose immediate interest in supporting that credit would be so great. They state as a great difficulty the borrowing of twelve millions within the term, when *on the same pledge* they can borrow twenty. Their statement of sums is not, I believe, very accurate, or perhaps my memory is not accurate. However, I am sure the idea is, that the greater sum can be borrowed more easily than the less. There is also the farther very extraordinary idea, that it is for the interest of the United States to pay between four and five per cent upon a negotiation, rather than get it done for nothing. I shall not notice many expressions which are injurious, but make to

their affectation of disinterestedness, the answer which Jacob Van Staphorst made to me. It is very strange that they should say all this, when they must remember that in M. Calonne's time, they offered him only fourteen millions of livres for one half of the thirty-two, and arrearages of interest, but would not take the whole, even at that rate, which is the reason why the bargain was broken off. I should make but a poor excuse for so long a story, if I stopped here; but I will now proceed to give you what I conceive to be the key of the riddle.

These gentlemen are engaged, as I suppose you know, in very extensive speculations upon the funded debt of America. They have lately worked this matter to a most astonishing benefit. Above three millions of that debt, which cost them five shillings in the pound, has been made the basis of a loan on which they receive sixty per cent, and are bound to repay it by instalments *from the interest receivable in America*. The Dutch, however, prefer lending at five per cent to the Congress direct. It is, therefore, essential to the success of their schemes, that they should be able to suspend the one loan always till they have completed the other; and thus our national interests are rendered subservient to their particular negotiations. You will easily see that one such operation, *in which there is no risk*, is better worth pursuing than *the very great profit* they complain of. With this hint you will understand the matter thoroughly. I must come to a conclusion.

I did not see M. Necker as I expected this afternoon, because he was gone to council; however I must suspend, at least, the matter with him; but you may rely on it that if the Minister at this court, or any other agent, be authorised fully to deal in the business, and, if the court will not readily agree to a new arrangement respecting the debt, to contract with individuals, that the matter can be yet managed in the manner above mentioned, provided it be not too long delayed. As to the loan which the commissioners have undertaken of their own heads, you may, I think, derive great advantage from it; for, in the first place, your Minister or Agent can make terms with

them to that amount at pleasure, for the benefit of the United States ; and you may, in the next place, convert the money to very useful purpose by sinking three or four times as much of the domestic debt, and raising the price at the same time towards par, which will prevent the success of speculations by foreigners, which are a loss to America. I am very truly, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO WILLIAM SHORT, AMSTERDAM.

Paris, February 20, 1790.

Dear Sir,

You have seen the decree which has been made respecting tobacco, and which gives to French shipping a preference of above one hundred livres per ton over American. Previous to the decision on this business, I was desired by a note to dine with Monsieur de Lafayette, in order to confer on American business. And note, that I had attended once before, when he wished me to go with him to the Committee of Commerce, but I declined until the Committee should ask my attendance, which they have not done. At the conference to which I was invited, were present Mr Swan, and Colonel Walker, and a little man whom Chastellux formerly recommended to me as being a disciple of Doctor Pangloss. In his way to America he was shipwrecked, had his toes frozen off, and was afterwards, I believe, appointed to some subordinate place in the consular office. During the conference, another little man came in, whom I do not know, but have been told that his name is Raymond, and that he is from Alsace.

After Lafayette had proposed the question, I asked the opinion of Walker and Swan, which they gave, and the latter in particular observed that the southern provinces would soon supply the kingdom, if the culture was allowed. I delivered my sentiments to the following effect. A sacrifice of the interest of France to that of America could not reasonably be

expected. The first question was, or ought to be, whether they could dispense with the revenue. If they could, then they should give it up entirely, and consult the commercial interest of the country. That to this effect they should make the article free to be imported and exported everywhere. That if on the contrary they should deem the revenue necessary, then the following modes of obtaining it occurred. 1. a Duty ; 2. an Excise ; 3. a Farm ; 4. a *Régie*. That the first, if great, would be eluded ; that the second, incompatible with their new principles, was not worth establishing as a single article, because of the expense attending it ; that the third was out of fashion ; and by the fourth they would be cheated.

Respecting the free culture, I gave it as my decided opinion, that in a short time it would totally destroy the tobacco trade, and to this effect I stated the charges attending the transportation of that article, which amount to about three guineas on the medium produce of an acre. And I have no doubt that the south of France will produce as good tobacco as Virginia. About this time the Alsacian came in, and said a great deal to prove what, if I can read the countenance, he did not believe a word of, viz. that no tobacco would be planted even if the permission were granted, excepting in Flanders and Alsace. I did not think it worth while to attempt a useless confutation, but told Lafayette that as they had already set Alsace on fire, I could not advise them to add more fuel. That I had given him facts from which he might draw his own conclusions. That I would not pretend to advise, but would venture to predict. That the free culture would be permitted, and thereby the revenue be lost ; but that afterwards the culture would be prohibited through all France, and the revenue be established. I could not but smile inwardly at the conduct of the business. The national interests are every way injured, those of America by no means served, and Alsace is the dupe. All this, time I think will show.

Finding that the decrees bore so hard upon us, both in our agriculture and navigation, I have, notwithstanding my previ-

ous determination, spoken to Monsieur de Lafayette, who, according to custom, asked for *a little note about it*. I spoke also to Monsieur de Montmorin, at whose request I have really written a pretty large note, which he will get translated and deliver to the Diplomatic Committee. It purports to be observations of sundry American citizens. I mean to keep out of sight as much as possible, and do all the good I can; and for the rest I repeat again, let the world wag as it may. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO WILLIAM SHORT, PARIS.

London, April 23d, 1790.

Dear Sir,

I have received yours of the eleventh instant. I have no doubt but that the advocates of the *Assignats forcés* will triumph in the success of their favorite plan. A momentary advantage was of course to be expected, and in all matters depending on opinion the effect becomes a cause; hence you will find for some time a regular increase of the *happy* consequences. But this measure has in it the certain cause of evil, and that cause will in due time produce its effect, which will also be increased by opinion. The bounds of a letter would not permit of the full developement of such principles as apply to the subject; but a word to the wise is sufficient.

I would send you Hamilton's plan, (just now received,) but Mr Parker has already sent it, and you will find one postage sufficient. It was not from what I found in Amsterdam, that I was deterred from pursuing the propositions to M. Necker, but the conviction that his expectations have been so raised, as to shut his ears to anything which could with safety be proposed; and I have not enough of the knight errant in my composition to go beyond that line.

I think Colonel Hamilton's idea of obtaining money at four

per cent is premature. Doubtless it will be practicable at a future day, when we do not want money, and our loans should be so managed *now*, as to leave room for taking advantage of that circumstance hereafter; but such an attempt would not succeed at present. Had my proposals been accepted, I think I should have so managed as to bring that matter about in a very short time; but everything must be now suspended, for a few weeks at least. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

WILLIAM SHORT TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Paris, September 12th, 1790.

Dear Sir,

The last letter which I had the pleasure of receiving from you was of the tenth of August; it was only the beginning of a letter, which some company coming in obliged you to cut short. I was in hopes you would have sent me the continuation of it; for I have great pleasure in receiving your sentiments on the persons and things which are here before me. Although my opinion of them is not always the same with yours, still you have great authorities and much experience in your favor, and besides support what you say with so much ingenuity and eloquence, as must always instruct and please, and often convince; and this you know is of all things the most difficult, as every one seems to consider his opinion as a property which is the last he will relinquish.

The present feature of affairs here is such, as confirms your friends in the opinion they had conceived of your judgment in such matters. I see often some of them, who say you not only predicted what was to happen, but how; they wish to consult you now, that you might tell them when the bankruptcy will arrive, and whether there will be a civil war, and what will be the event of it. There is no danger in talking of you in this manner as you are not here, but if you were within the juris-

diction of the *Comité des Recherches*, I should be afraid of their making you a nocturnal visit. These visits have lately become fashionable ; one of the most remarkable is one which has just taken place. A washerman found a letter in the dirty pockets of one of his fair customers, which had the appearance to him, as he did not know how to read, of a counter-revolution ; by means of the district this came to the knowledge of the *Comité des Recherches*. The lady in question was called before them late at night, and underwent an interrogatory of some hours. Her papers were examined, but nothing found. The *Comité des Recherches* made their report to the Assembly, informed them, as a proof of their vigilance and zeal, that they had passed the whole night without sleeping, were applauded by the Assembly, and the female was ordered not to leave Paris. And all this is considered as the sure and certain road to the establishment of a free government, and particularly to the securing of personal liberty.

There is a plan for paper money now before the Assembly. The Assembly is divided in their opinion, and so are the commercial towns ; but the people who fill the galleries, and who surround the Assembly-house often in crowds, seem to be unanimous in favor of it. Mirabeau undertakes to prove that it is not paper money. It is true that it is a paper, which you may force your creditor to receive, and which is to have all the legal properties of money, but still he swears and so do many others, that it is not paper money, because it has land for its pledge. Some insist on calling it *papier-terre*, and the idea was near passing. It has been lately decided, that the final vote shall not be taken on it before the 17th. My opinion is, that should the two millions which they talk of be issued, for the purpose of immediately paying off the *dette exigible*, a great part of it, instead of being thus applied, will be diverted to the daily exigencies of government, and for which it seems evident a sufficient quantity of taxes will not be collected. You will readily believe, that a government like this will not adopt the harsh business of forcing taxes, so long as they can make use of that gentle means

of striking paper to satisfy their demands. This argument, however, has no force with the members of the Assembly; they all advocate or oppose the system on other principles; the objection of so great an emission, changing the proportion of prices of all articles of commerce, seems not to have its full weight, though it is used by some. So much is written and said for and against this system, that it is impossible to discover what will be the decision. I think, however, that if the vote of the Assembly should be taken independent of any external influence, it would be rejected.

An opinion begins now to prevail here, that the Assembly are not very desirous of putting an end to their session. You know they have determined that their powers continue until the constitution is finished. You know also, that they are inviolable for criminal matters, though not for debts (by their decrees.) You know that they concentrate in their hands all the powers of government and exercise them daily. To an impartial person this certainly presents the idea of a very aristocratical and tyrannical body. It is observable that public inquiry begins to examine more attentively the nature of their powers; so that if they make no further progress in the constitution, than they have done for some time, it would not be at all surprising if public opinion should soon be as much against, as it has been for them.

You will have heard of M. Necker's retreat from the helm. It produced no effect either on the public mind or public funds. The Assembly received intelligence yesterday of his being stopped on his way to Switzerland by a municipality, although he had a passport from the King and from the mayor of Paris. He and the municipality both wrote to the Assembly; he, to inform them of his being stopped and to desire a permission to continue his route; the municipality, to inform them that as they had determined that ministers should be responsible, and as M. Necker's passport authorised his quitting the kingdom, which would destroy the responsibility, they had thought proper to stop him. The Assembly have directed

their President to write to the municipality to give him his liberty. Some members were for voting their thanks to the municipality.

We have intelligence here from New York as late as the 20th of July. You have probably later. You will have been informed of the removal of Congress. Would it not have been as well to have remained the ten years at New York, where they were well settled? I have seen the bill passed by the Senate for a foreign loan, and for assuming a certain sum of state debt. I am not acquainted with the resources which Congress have in view, but I should fear those of which we know as yet would not be sufficient to fulfil the engagements taken, and I fear still more that a failure of an engagement taken by Congress at present will have a bad effect on future engagements. Still I have much confidence in their wisdom, and suppose they have a certainty of calling to their aid new resources. Their designs as to foreign appointments are enveloped in as much secrecy, as those of Mr Pitt's armaments. I suppose a very short time will give us some certain information on this subject, or at least some data to reason on. They talk of two ministers and two *Chargés des Affaires*. The salary of the former remains the same; the latter they have augmented fifty per cent. The proportion is certainly not well preserved, agreeably to the ideas of the courts of Europe. I will thank you, if you have any farther or later information of the proceedings of Congress, to inform me of them. Be assured of the sentiments of attachment with which I am yours, &c.

WILLIAM SHORT.

TO WILLIAM SHORT.

London, September 18th, 1790.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 12th did not arrive until this morning. It is perfectly natural that your opinions should differ from mine.

There will ever be a difference of opinions on subjects, which do not admit of demonstration. It will be very long before political subjects will be reduced to geometric certitude. At present the reasoning on them is a kind of arithmetic of infinities, where the best information, the wisest head, and clearest mind, can only approach the truth. A cautious man should, therefore, give only Sybilline predictions, if indeed he should hazard any. But I am not a cautious man. I therefore give it as my opinion, that they will issue the paper currency, and substitute thereby depreciation in the place of bankruptcy, or rather suspension.

Apropos of this currency, this *papier-terre*, I could tell them of a country where there is a *papier-terre* now *mort et enterré*. The Assembly have committed many blunders, which is not to be wondered at. They have taken genius instead of reason for their guide, adopted experiment instead of experience, and wander in the dark because they prefer lightning to light. I think you are mistaken in supposing, that the emission of paper will destroy the *proportion* of prices. This proportion is independent of the medium of trade. The one results from a relation of things, the other is only an ideal standard by which to measure those things. Your height and mine would be the same, and consequently the proportion of one to the other the same, although a measure of six inches should be called a foot.

You are very merry on the subject of personal liberty, but the District has more to say than many are aware of. Is it not written in the *Droit d'Homme*, that liberty is an inalienable property of man inseparable from the human character? And if this be so, pray what better mode of securing personal liberty than to secure the person? Your wits may sneer, but you must learn to respect the decrees of the municipalities, which like those of Heaven are inscrutable, but not on that account the less entitled to obedience and respect. The lady, I am told, is so far from complaining of the restraint she was laid under, that although an aristocrat, she tells the Assembly with

all becoming humility that she finds their yoke is easy and their burden light, while the young gentleman ordered on duty in her chamber acknowledges that service to be perfect freedom. Shortsighted man that you are ! Is it not a general complaint, that France is torn by a division of political sentiment and opinion ? And what mode so effectual to produce a union of both, as to give the women of one party in charge to men of the other ? By way of addition and amendment, I would humbly propose that the male aristocrats should be put into the custody of the female whigs, and I dare say they would come out much less fierce than they were.

That the Assembly should continue its session too long is both natural and necessary. Mankind in general reason only from their feelings, and therefore to discern the wrong, which that body has committed, the people must first be heartily displeased with them. And then they will go too far the other way. It is a pendulum, and the farther you draw it on one side the farther will it go towards the other.

I have very late news from America, viz. the 14th of August, but my correspondents do not give themselves the trouble to communicate any political intelligence. The funding bill is, I understand, in this city, but I have not yet seen it. They have not provided for the full interest of the public debt. As to the ability of the country, you need not entertain the slightest apprehension. The domestic debt is always a mere nominal thing. It neither adds to, nor takes away from the mass of *national* property, but furnishes a species of *private* property, which from its convertible nature, and by holding a kind of middle rank between real value and the mere sign of value, may be rendered of admirable use to increase commercial circulation, invigorate the manufactures, and consequently to benefit the agricultural interests, which receive thereby under the name of *price* more than they pay under the name of *tax*.

The situation of France is by no means desperate. A torrent of depreciation may inundate the land, and storms and tempests arise, but the one you know fertilizes the soil, and the

other purifies the atmosphere. Ultimately health and abundance succeed the wintry appearance, which seemed fatal to both. Adieu. I shall leave this in a day or two.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THE CHEVALIER TERNANT,* PARIS.

London, May 4th, 1790.

Dear Sir,

Your favor of the 22d of last month reached me too late to reply by the last post. If your friends speculate in the *Assignats*, I wish them much success, but I incline to think that there will be more loss than gain in such speculations. You and I know a little about *paper money*. There is somewhere on the way towards me a long letter and other documents respecting some lands in America, about which we have had a conversation together. I will write to you about that affair when I receive it. You mistake me if you suppose that I meant to stimulate your endeavors. I was prompted merely by a common sense of justice. Why should your time and attention be consumed by the business of other people? But I quit this subject.

Pray let me know how affairs go on. I think the public opinion is now inflated by the *Assignats*, which will prove at last to be but a frail reliance. There seems to be a kind of *petite guerre* between the *Assemblée* and M. Necker. This will do no good to either; but in such contests the *one* generally sinks under the efforts of the *many*. How stands our friend Lafayette. Very much depends on him. I see no means of extricating you from your troubles, but that which most men would consider as the means of plunging you into greater—I mean a war. And you should make it to yourselves

* Ternant served as a Colonel in the American army during the Revolution; and afterwards succeeded M. de Moustiers as French Minister in the United States.

a war of *men*, to your neighbors a war of *money*. I do not explain, because a word to the wise is sufficient. You want just now great men to pursue great measures. As to the idea that you can keep out of the fire, which consumes your neighbors and your allies, it is ridiculous. You must suffer either for or with them; and the latter is at once the nobler and the safer position. But I correct and check myself with a due respect for the gentlemen in the several post offices, who will, I hope, permit my letter to go forward and convey to you the assurance of my regard.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO M. DE LAFAYETTE.

London, May 7th, 1790.

My Dear Sir,

When this letter reaches your hands it will probably find you meditating on the situation of France, which is not perhaps enviable, but it is by no means so dreadful as would at first sight appear. This country is arming, and I am convinced with a determination to compel not only Spain, but every other power, to subscribe such terms as she may choose to dictate. You will strive in vain to deprecate the blow, therefore you must prepare to meet it, to return it, or rather so to strike as may prevent it.

The enclosed letter is left open for your perusal; pray forward it. I do not think that France can be prepared before September; but it is not improbable that under existing circumstances the King of Hungary would cede, as a *don de famille*, his rights to the low countries upon assurances of effectual aid to support his claims to Silesia, and elsewhere in that quarter. Certainly a good understanding might be obtained with the party of General Vandermersch, and measures might be taken to secure the surrender of the few garrison towns, which are in that country. These things being ripened, two armies, compos-

ed in a great measure of militia, might march, the one from Luxembourg and take post in Liege, so as to oppose there effectually with any army of good troops the efforts of Prussia ; the other might go along the sea coast. But a detachment of each army might move so as to form a junction at Brussels, and go thence down the Scheldt to Antwerp. The mode of co-operating against Holland seems to me to be from Dunkirk, with vessels which Jones will describe to you, so as to fall in upon Amsterdam ; which being effected would, with the aid of the popular party, give possession of the whole country. Or, allowing a great part, or even the whole of this plan to fail at first, it would eventually succeed in uniting all Flanders to the Kingdom of France, and, *by obliging this country to fight at land, would greatly exhaust her.*

Previous to striking a blow, preparations should be made in your islands, by laying an embargo on all ships there on the same day that an embargo is laid on ships in your own ports ; and if the nation should not be able to fit out all your ships of war, the smaller ones might be disposed of to great advantage to merchants, who would fit them out as privateers. Such ships of war as you can fit out might be selected from the fastest sailers, and cruise upon the commerce, with orders to destroy whatever they can, and *to secure the seamen.* The Dutch commerce should be respected, let them do what they will ; by which means you will secure friends in that country and excite contention between the allies.

The difference between France and Britain is, that the former can exist without commerce, but the latter cannot. Secure their seamen, and never exchange them ; you will by that means ruin both their Marine and Finance ; and, if you send those seamen into the interior parts of the kingdom, and employ them in public works upon the highways, &c. &c. they will cost you nothing, and by degrees lose their habits of seaman-ship.

I hear you cry out that the Finances are in a deplorable situation. This should be no obstacle. I think that they may

be restored during war better than in peace. You want also something to turn men's attention from their present discontents. Admitting, however, everything that can be said on the chapter of Finance, surely it is better to strike than to be struck ; and you will strive in vain to parry the blow. Adieu.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, November 22d, 1790.

Dear Sir,

The country I now inhabit, on which so many other countries depend, having sunk to absolute nothingness, has deranged the general state of things in every quarter ; and what complicates the scene in no small degree is the incertitude which prevails, as to her future fate, because a new system, calculated on the palsied state of France, would be as effectually deranged by her recovery, as that was which leaned upon her greatness heretofore and fell in her fall. The northern courts, removed at a greater distance from her influence, had provided for themselves by an alliance, which took place immediately after the peace between Sweden and Russia. I think I hinted in a former letter my expectation, that a new system would arise there. In effect a treaty concluded between what may be called the Baltic powers will have considerable influence hereafter upon the general system. When you recollect that they are exclusively the magazine of naval stores in this hemisphere, your comprehensive mind will seize at once the consequences, which may follow to America from combinations where such articles are indispensable. This same Baltic is also a granary for southern Europe. Hence a new source of important reflection. I think that occasions will ere long present themselves, in which America may be essentially concerned. But to come nearer to my present position, the Emperor disengaged from the Turk and likely to be soon repossessed of Flanders, will be there in the command

of fifty thousand men, besides the resource which every sovereign derives from an unsuccessful revolt. The King of Prussia is no longer at the head of an effective Germanic league. The fear of Austria and her connexions has, for evident reasons, subsided, and the Baron Hertzberg, rather a pedant than politician, but illy fills that great void which was left by the death of Frederick. In fact, Prussia seems to be just that country in shape, extent, fertility, population, connexion, and relation, which one would have chosen to show what great genius can do with incompetent materials, and what a dream is human greatness.

The Emperor is in possession of proofs, that the spirit of revolt through all his dominions was fostered by that court, and would have broken out in every quarter at the instant of a war. Hence the sudden pacification at Reichenback, of which the Prussian was the dupe, though he dictated terms. You will readily suppose that Leopold, neither as a man nor a statesman, can look on such conduct 'in the calm sight of mild philosophy.' Hereditary claims to dominion, which his rival is possessed of, a long opposition of jarring interests, and the bitterness of that cup he has just been forced to drink, must lead him to seek and to seize the moment of vengeance. Forgiveness is not a family feature in the House of Lorraine, neither is Italy the school of Christian meekness. On the other hand, the alliance between him and the late sovereign of this country is rent to tatters. Not formally cancelled, it is effectually annulled. The French nation hate the Emperor, and detest a connexion, which seems nevertheless to be the wisest that could have been formed.

The great power of this monarchy has been for centuries an insurmountable barrier to imperial ambition. Leopold must therefore wish to see it injured, and even dismembered. Many of the German princes, who have rights within the boundaries of France, secured to them by numerous treaties, and guaranteed by the Germanic corps, but lately violated by the National Assembly, wish the whole empire to insist on restitution, and in case of refusal to engage in a war, whose object

would be the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine. Many of the discontented nobles and clergy of France are urgent with the chief of the empire to avenge the insults offered to his unfortunate sister. So fair a pretext, such plausible reasons, both public and private, joined to a great political interest and personal territorial claims, might determine an enterprising prince. But he is cautious; trusting more to art than force. He sits on a throne which lately tottered, and is hardly yet confirmed. He has before him the example of a predecessor, whose incessant toils brought only an increase of laborious care; whose anxieties wore away the web of his existence; and whose mighty projects were but the 'baseless fabric of a vision.' The Germanic body itself is distracted between the duty of supporting its members, and a dread of destroying the check upon its chief.

This unhappy country, bewildered in the pursuit of metaphysical whimsies, presents to our moral view a mighty ruin. Like the remnants of ancient magnificence, we admire the architecture of the temple, while we detest the false god to whom it was dedicated. Daws and ravens, and the birds of night, now build their nests in its niches. The sovereign, humbled to the level of a beggar's pity, without resources, without authority, without a friend. The Assembly at once a master and a slave, new in power, wild in theory, raw in practice. It engrosses all functions though incapable of exercising any, and has taken from this fierce ferocious people every restraint of religion and of respect. Sole executors of the law, and therefore supreme judges of its propriety, each district measures out its obedience by its wishes, and the great interests of the whole, split up into fractional morsels, depend on momentary impulse and ignorant caprice. Such a state of things cannot last.

But how will it end? Here conjecture may wander through unbounded space. What sum of misery may be requisite to change popular will, calculation cannot determine. What circumstances may arise in the order of Divine Providence to give direction to that will, our sharpest vision cannot discover.

What talents may be found to seize those circumstances, to influence that will, and above all to moderate the power which it must confer, we are equally ignorant of. One thing only seems to be tolerably ascertained, that the glorious opportunity is lost, and (for this time at least) the revolution has failed. In the consequences of it we may however find some foundation of future prosperity. Such are, 1. The abolition of those different rights and privileges, which kept the provinces asunder, occasioning thereby a variety of taxation, increasing the expenses of collection, impeding the useful communication of commerce, and destroying that unity in the system of distributive justice, which is one requisite to social happiness. 2. The abolition of feudal tyranny, by which the tenure of real property is simplified, the value reduced to money, rent is more clearly ascertained, and the estimation which depended upon idle vanity, or capricious taste, or sullen pride, is destroyed. 3. The extension of the circle of commerce to those vast possessions held by the clergy in mortmain, which conferring great wealth as the wages of idleness, damped the ardor of enterprise, and impaired that ready industry, which, increases the stock of national riches. 4. The destruction of a system of venal jurisprudence, which, arrogating a kind of legislative *вето*, had established the pride and privileges of the few, on the misery and degradation of the general mass. 5. Above all, the promulgation and extension of those principles of liberty, which will, I hope, remain to cheer the heart and cherish a nobleness of soul, when the metaphysical froth and vapor shall have been blown away. The awe of that spirit which has been thus raised, will, I trust, excite in those who may hereafter possess authority a proper moderation in its exercise, and induce them to give to this people a real constitution of government, fitted to the natural, moral, social, and political state of their country.

How and when these events may be brought about I know not. But I think from the chaos of opinion, and the conflict of its jarring elements, a new order will at length arise, which though in some degree the child of chance, may not be less

productive of human happiness, than the forethought provisions of human speculation.

In the beginning of this year I mentioned the conviction that, during the course of it, the then ministry would *wear out*. This has been literally verified, and M. de Montmorin is the only remaining shred of the old garment. As to the present temporary set, I shall say nothing just now, reserving to a better opportunity some sentiments on particular men. The object of this letter is, as you will observe, to communicate as nearly as I can that state of things, which may in a greater or smaller degree be forced upon your attention. I must add the conviction, that my letters present very different prospects from those, which may reach you through other channels. You, who know mankind thoroughly, will be able to form a solid opinion; and however that may vary from mine, I shall still rejoice if even by the display of false ideas, I shall have cast any additional light upon those which are true. I am always, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, December 1st, 1790.

Dear Sir,

I had the honor to address you a letter on the twenty-second of last month, in the close of which I mentioned the intention of saying at a future period some few words of the people, who are now on the stage. To begin then with our friend Lafayette, who has hitherto acted a splendid part. The King obeys but detests him. He obeys because he fears. Whoever possesses the royal person, may do what he pleases with the royal character and authority. Hence it happens that the ministers are of Lafayette's appointment. A short description of their use was given the other day by Mirabeau. 'We make ministers,' said he, 'as we used formerly to send servants to keep our boxes at the playhouse.' I gave you the explanation of this jest while

I was in London. Lafayette thinks that these his creatures will worship their creator, but he is mightily mistaken.

You know Duportail,* the Minister of War. He is said to be violent in favor of the revolution. It is more than a year since I have seen him, excepting a short visit of congratulation the other day. My judgment, therefore, should have little weight; but I believe he is too much the friend of liberty to approve of the constitution. For the rest; he has as you know that command of himself, and that simplicity of exterior deportment, which carry a man as far as his abilities will reach. He may perhaps remember his creator in his ministerial youth, in order that his days may be long in the land of office; but I venture to predict, that his duteous observance will not endure one half second beyond the moment of necessity. I believe I did not mention to you, about a year ago, the intention to appoint him; but at that time I endeavored to take his measure. The minister of the Marine I know nothing about. They say he is a good kind of man, which is saying very little. The Keeper of the Seals, Monsieur Duport-Dutertre, was a lawyer of eminence thrown up into notice by the circumstances of the moment. He is said to possess both abilities and firmness. Monsieur Delessart, the Minister of the Finances, is rather above than below mediocrity, and possesses that kind of civil assent which never compromises the possessor, though it seldom travels in company with greatness.

There is not a man among them fitted for the great tasks in which they are engaged, and greater tasks are perhaps impending. I have no proofs, but I have a well founded opinion, that the leaders of one party wish, what those of the other fear, and both expect, viz. the interference of foreign powers. One previous step would be to carry off, if possible, the King and Queen. The latter at least, for there is every reason to ap-

* He served in the American war as an officer of engineers. After leaving the ministry he was denounced and proscribed, and to escape the fury of his accusers, he fled to America, where he remained till 1802, and died on his passage back to France.

prehend for their safety, should violent measures be adopted while they are here.

For my own part I do not believe in any such interference, neither do I think that the opposers of the Assembly have sufficient energy of character to make a civil war. Their attempts, if any, will, I imagine, be feeble and consequently ruinous to themselves. If indeed they had a considerable part of the army, commanded by the Prince of Condé, and the person of the King in his possession; and if they came forward to establish a proper constitution, adopting such good things as the Assembly have done, and rejecting the evil; then indeed there would be different grounds of expectation. But I consider this rather as the visionary hope of a few, than as the fixed plan of persons who can carry it into execution. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, February 26th, 1791.

Dear Sir,

I am to acknowledge your favors of the twenty-sixth of November, and seventeenth of December, which reached me two days ago. The system of finance did not indeed fully meet my opinions, but I know it is necessary to conform even to the prejudices of mankind. I fully believe with you, that any resources dependent on consumption will greatly increase. I believe this increase will not be merely in proportion to that of population, but in the compound ratio of numbers and wealth. This last will be abundantly produced by an industrious people from a luxuriant soil. Taxation moreover excites industry and necessitates economy. It increases also the commercial medium, inasmuch as it creates a domestic object for the application of money, and forces an interior circulation.

Pardon me while on this chapter, for expressing my apprehension that the sale of western lands will not produce the present

relief expected, and it will consume a valuable future resource. America has not the needful money capital. I put aside taxation, and consider only the three great objects of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce. These in populous and polished societies present themselves in the order I have just placed them ; but this order is inverted with us. Commerce, by more potent means, commands a preference. To supply its wants a bank is useful, but its operations will not produce all that is expected. Among many other reasons, because we have not yet a great centre of commerce, finance, and *money dealing*. The payment of interest in the States has a tendency also to obviate and impede bank circulation. The channels of commerce are not yet duly filled. Those of manufactures are scarcely moistened ; those of agriculture are absolutely dry. Whenever therefore the government puts up lands for sale, it calls money from those objects to which I verily believe it might be more advantageously applied. The purchaser calculates, and will not part with his cash, till he sees greater benefit than in any other appropriation. Under present circumstances the hesitation will be whether to purchase stocks or lands. If by lowering the price of land you make that the greater temptation, stocks must fall, and then foreigners will buy them cheap. The land if sold cannot be cultivated, but if not sold it cannot run away as the stocks do. Besides, by throwing more land on the market you ruin those, who have no means to pay debts but by sale of real estate, &c. &c. I quit the discussion and indeed beg your pardon for entering into it.

My letters from London of the 24th and 28th of December will have communicated what passed with the British administration. I am sorry now that I spoke to them, because from yours of the 17th of that month I find it was the President's pleasure, that no other application should be made, but I flatter myself that the manner was such, as by no means to compromise the dignity of our country.*

* The following is an extract from Mr Jefferson's letters of December the 17th, here alluded to ;

‘ Since mine to you of August the 12th, yours of July the 3d, August

You very kindly, my dear Sir, in that letter communicate the President's approbation of my conduct. I cannot tell you the pleasure which this occasions, but you will estimate it by your own feelings under similar circumstances. Pardon me for adding that I feel highly gratified in receiving the communication from you.

In this letter you enclose an order for 2475 florins, on the bankers in Holland. Make for me I pray you the proper acknowledgements. Pecuniary considerations never yet weighed with me, where the public service was in question; and therefore immediately on receipt of the President's orders, I proceeded, without regarding other objects, as speedily as I could to London. Previous engagements had indeed rendered it my duty to go to Amsterdam, and on that route I made those inquiries which you once desired I would. The result has since been occasionally communicated to Mr Short. I embarked at Helvoetsluys the twenty-fourth of March, and continued in London till the twenty-fourth of September, although I had no business of my own there, but such as I could have transacted by letters. I would have staid still longer had I imagined it could have been of any use. My expenses dur-

the 16th, and September the 18th, have come to hand. They suffice to remove all doubts, which might have been entertained as to the real intentions of the British cabinet, on the several matters confided to you. The view of government in troubling you with this business was, either to remove from between the two nations all causes of difference, by a fair and friendly adjustment, if such was the intention of the other party, or to place it beyond a doubt that such was not their intention. In result it is clear enough, that further applications would tend to delay rather than advance our object. It is therefore the pleasure of the President, that no others be made; and that in whatever state this letter may find the business, in that state it be left. I have it in charge at the same time to assure you, that your conduct in these communications with the British Ministers has met the President's entire approbation, and to convey to you his acknowledgements for your services.

'As an attendance on this business must, at times, have interfered with your private pursuits, and subjected you also to additional expenses, I have the honor to enclose you a draft on our bankers in Holland for a thousand dollars, as an indemnification for those sacrifices.'

ing that period were £489 : 6 : 6 ; but I did not intend to ask compensation, nor do I mention them now in that view.

Since I have been in this city a matter has turned up, which is very interesting to America, and the result of which is by no means pleasing. I mean the decrees respecting tobacco. The second day of this month I was requested to go to Monsieur de Lafayette, and thence with him to speak on that subject to the Committee of Commerce. I went to his house, but declined waiting on the Committee, unless they should previously desire it. This was fortunate, for the arrangements had been so illy made that the Committee did not meet, and for little reasons not worth mentioning, some of the members were predisposed not to receive information. On the 9th I dined with him, in consequence of a note desiring me to confer on American business. After dinner Mr Swan, Colonel Walker, and I were introduced into his closet with a M. Raymond, and another man whose name I forget ; but he was I believe something in the consulate at New York. Monsieur de Lafayette asked our opinion on the question then agitated, respecting a free culture of tobacco in France. Mirabeau had moved to prohibit it, after a certain time, even in the privileged provinces, but Monsieur de Lafayette considered it as standing closely connected with the disaffection then prevalent in Alsace. Mr Swan gave it as his opinion, that if the free culture was allowed, the introduction of that article from America must speedily cease. M. Raymond insisted that the culture, if permitted, would not be pursued ; but it seemed to me that he did not, and indeed could not, think so. The other gentleman was silent. Colonel Walker observed, that he supposed France would consult her own interest, and therefore it was not worth while to inquire what was the interest of America ; and in this I think he judged perfectly well. I refused to give an opinion, but stated facts to show that Mr Swan was right in his judgment, and then observed that the question seemed to turn on the single point, whether they could dispense with the revenue ; for if they could not, they must consider the means of obtaining it, which were either Duty, Excise, Farm, or *Régie*. That the

first would, if great, be eluded. The second was not now practicable ; the third was unfashionable ; and by the last they would be cheated. If, however, they would dispense with the revenue, then not only they might allow the free culture, but they ought to allow the free commerce. I stated the advantages which would result from the latter. He seemed surprised at some things as not having presented themselves, and pressed for an opinion, to which I replied, that I would not advise, but predict. That they would begin by allowing the free culture, which would annihilate the revenue ; and in less than two years they would prohibit the culture to recover the revenue. The thing has turned out as I expected as far as it went. Colonel Ternant has endeavored to prevent the culture, and to render the commerce as free as possible, but in vain. We have held sundry conferences on the subject together. He communicated to me what was doing, and I gave him all the information I could. The Assembly have allowed the culture, and laid a duty of twenty-five livres per quintal upon the import, one fourth of which is taken off from such as may be brought from America in French bottoms. This, in addition to the heavy duty on our oil, bears hard. To the arguments of such as blame these decrees it is answered, that it will be necessary to form a commercial treaty with America, and then everything can be regulated.

I had hitherto, you will observe, kept as clear as I could from interfering ; but the matter had now put on an appearance, which demanded the exertions of every American citizen. On the seventeenth, therefore, I called on Monsieur de Lafayette. He desired me to give him a note on the subject, said that Mirabeau had promised to speak about it ; and that he expected the Diplomatic Committee would take the matter up. I had been told long before what part Mirabeau would take, and how much he would receive for his agency. I asked, therefore, whether it would not answer for the king to object, because the Assembly being much divided, a trifle would turn the balance, and it had been said, that if he would himself have taken a part

in the debate the question would have been otherwise decided. He told me he would rather the United States should be indebted to the nation than to the king. But if things go on at the present rate we shall be indebted to neither.

The next day I called on the Count de Montmorin, who assured me he would do all in his power. By way of a spur I told him, that it was currently reported in London, that the British were going to send out a Minister to America, that I had good reason to believe it was their wish to form an offensive and defensive alliance with us, and presumed that he was acquainted with their intentions. He replied, as I supposed he would, in the affirmative. Upon this I asked him whether it would answer any good purpose for me to write him a letter on the subject. He pressed me earnestly to do so the next day, as he was in the evening of it to meet the Diplomatic Committee. In consequence I wrote on the nineteenth that of which a copy is enclosed.

You will observe that I hint at the views of Great Britain in such manner, that he must take on himself any communication of that sort to the Committee. As to the observations, I stated them as being made by American citizens in order to supply the defect of ministerial character, and also to keep myself out of sight, not choosing to be quoted in any of their deliberations. I have communicated these steps to Mr Short,* and am now endeavoring to obtain, if possible, a duty per arpent on the culture equivalent to the import duty, supposing each arpent to produce eight quintals. This, which would, I sincerely believe, be useless to France, would also prevent the sudden decrease in the consumption of our tobacco. And although I am convinced that planting it is bad husbandry, yet I wish my countrymen rather to correct themselves by their own experience, than receive such a shock from abroad.

As yet there is little hope of success to any proposition for

* See above, page 109, the letter to Mr Short, which is there printed with a wrong date, namely, 1790 instead of 1791.

alleviating, much less removing, the burthens they have laid upon us. The greater part have adopted systematic reasonings in matters of commerce as in those of government, so that, disdaining attention to facts and deaf to the voice of experience, while others deliberate they decide, and are the more constant in their opinions in proportion as they are less acquainted with the subject, which is natural enough. *Stat pro ratione voluntas* has, you know, been the adage with those, who have much of one and little of the other, from time immemorial, and the Assembly will not, I think, lose by *non-user* that valuable franchise.

I will do myself the honor to communicate such farther matter as may occur in this regard, and beg leave in the mean time to assure you of the sincerity with which I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, March 9th, 1791.

Dear Sir,

I am to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the seventeenth of December, which reached me several days ago, but no good opportunity then presented itself to convey a reply.* The

* The following is an extract from General Washington's letter of December 17th.

'An official letter from the Secretary of State of this date, acknowledging the receipt of your dispatches on public business, will convey to you my sentiments on the views and intentions of the British cabinet. If the exigences of the national affairs of that kingdom should excite dispositions in it favorable to a commercial treaty with the United States, and to the fulfilment of the treaty of peace, its ministers will, of themselves, come forward with propositions. Until these are apparent to them, and press, I am persuaded, from the communications you have had with them, that it is not only useless, but derogatory, to push them any farther on the first point, or to say anything more on the second, until we are in a situation to speak with more decision.

idea you formed of the British cabinet was, I am persuaded, perfectly just. This government has lately taken some steps, which cannot but be advantageous to their rivals, for I am persuaded that the late duress laying a heavy duty on oil, giving a great preference of duty on tobacco imported in French ships, and declaring that none but those built in France shall be reputed French bottoms, will excite much ill humor in America. Those who rule here seem to think, that because the old government was sometimes wrong, everything contrary to what they did must be right; like Jack in the *Tale of the Tub*, who tore his coat to pieces in pulling off the fringe, points, and trimmings that Peter had put on. Or like the Old Congress in its young days, which rejected the offer of valuable contracts, and employed a host of commissaries and quarter-masters, because Great Britain dealt with contractors.

In the debate on this subject one of the Lameths gave it as his opinion, that America was not in a situation to be either sought or feared for some time to come. This, which is not however the sentiment of the party, occasioned some hints in the close of the observations I sent to M. de Montmorin, and of which a copy has been transmitted to Mr Jefferson. I hope that the Congress will not act precipitately in consequence of these decrees, for I believe that proper representations in a proper moment will produce a change, and really, in the present effervescence, very few acts of the Assembly can be considered as deliberate movements of national will.

‘Congress has commenced its third session. Our affairs assume a good aspect. Public credit is high, and stocks have arisen amazingly. Except the disturbances occasioned by a few hostile Indians on our western frontier (instigated thereto, I am persuaded, by the British traders,) and some remains of the old leaven, the wheels of government move without interruption, and gather strength as they move. The numbers of our people, so far as they can be ascertained by the *present state* of the census, will not fall short, it is said, of five millions; some think more. Whilst this will on the one hand astonish Europe, it may on the other add consequence to the union of these States.’

There still continue to be three parties here. The *Enragés*, long since known by the name of *Jacobins*, have lost much in the public opinion, so that they are less powerful in the Assembly than they were; but their Committees of Correspondence, (called *Sociétés Patriotiques*) spread all over the kingdom, have given them a deep, strong hold of the people. On the other hand, the numerous reforms, some of them unnecessary and all either harsh, precipitate, or extreme, have thrown into the aristocratic party a great number of discontented. The military, who as such look up to the sovereign, are somewhat less factious than they were, but they are rather a mob than an army, and must, I think, fall either to the Aristocratic or Jacobin side of the question.

The middle men are in a whimsical situation. In the Senate they follow the Jacobin counsels, rather than appear connected with the other party. The same principle of shame-facedness operates on great occasions out of doors; but as the Aristocrats have been forced down by a torrent of opinion from the heights of their absurd pretensions, and as the middle men begin to be alarmed at the extremities to which they have been hurried, these two parties might come together, if it were not for personal animosities among the leaders. This middle party would be the strongest, if the nation were virtuous; but, alas, this is not the case, and therefore I think it will only serve as a stepping stone for those, who may find it convenient to change sides.

In the midst however of all these confusions, what with confiscating the church property, selling the domains, curtailing pensions, and destroying offices, but especially by that great liquidator of public debts, a *paper currency*, this nation is working its way to a new state of active energy, which will I think be displayed as soon as a vigorous government shall establish itself. The intervening confusions will probably call forth men of talents to form such government and to exert its powers.

In a letter I had the honor to write on the twenty-second of November, I mentioned a treaty made between the Baltic pow-

ers. I do not know whether I drew this idea from information or conjecture, but it was in my mind and still continues there. While in England waiting at Whitehall for the Duke of Leeds, who was accidentally prevented from keeping his appointment, I had a long conversation with Mr Burgess, who seemed desirous of convincing me, that he was an efficient man in the office of Foreign Affairs. I asked him whether such treaty existed, insinuating that he must certainly be informed of every movement in that, as in every other quarter. He assured me positively that it did not; but that assurance did not alter my opinion. Indeed the object of my question was to discover, whether they were at all upon terms with Sweden, and from what afterwards passed, I am persuaded that they are not. I must add that my inquiries here have been answered in the same way, but yet I believe that such a treaty exists. He spoke a good deal of the convention with Spain, and I declared freely my opinion, which being favorable to the administration, drew from him in support of it a history of the negotiation. It ended (as he said) in this remarkable manner. The Count de Florida Blanca, upon hearing of the revolt of the French Marine, told the British Ambassador; 'You insist on the terms to which I am now about to agree, not because they are just, but because I am compelled to it. If France would assist us I would never submit; but we are not able singly to cope with you, and therefore you must do as you please.' You will judge, my dear Sir, how long such a treaty is likely to last.

I am delighted with the account you give me of our public affairs. There can be no doubt that a publication of the census, and a clear state of our finances, will impress a sense of our importance on the statesmen of Europe. We are now getting forward in the right way, not by little skirmishing advantages of political manœuvres, but in a solid column of well formed national strength. Like Father Mason's aristocratic screw, which you doubtless remember, at every turn we shall now gain and hold what we get. It is no evil that you should have a little of the old leaven. I have always considered an opposition in free

governments as a kind of outward conscience, which prevents the administration from doing many things through inadvertence, which they might repent of. By these means both men and measures are sifted, and the necessity of appearing as well as of being right confirms and consolidates the good opinion of society. I expect and am indeed certain, that this good opinion will live with you during life, and follow weeping to your grave. I know you will continue to deserve it, and I hope you may long live to vex your enemies by serving your country. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, March 16th, 1791.

Dear Sir,

I had the honor to write to you on the twenty-sixth of last month, to which I now refer. Since that period the Assembly have taken another step in the same disagreeable road. They have deprived all ships other than those built in France of the privilege of French bottoms. This, added to the other duress already noticed, produces, I am told, much sensation among the few Americans who are settled in the ports of this kingdom.

You will find enclosed herein a copy of the note, which I gave to the Marquis de Lafayette. He told me in conversation when I urged his interference, that by so doing he should injure us, because his enemies had already voted against us, contrary to their general opinion, merely to vex and injure him. This is very unfortunate.* I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

* An extract from a letter to Robert Morris, dated March 13th, gives a further explanation on this subject.

‘When the matter was taken up the culture was permitted, and such a heavy duty laid as would secure an immense profit to those, who had purchased up the tobacco on speculation; then came the difference

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, May 27th 1791.

Dear Sir,

I have the honor to enclose a letter and sundry papers relating to it, from Messieurs Shweizer, Jeannerst & Co. I have referred these gentlemen to Mr Short, telling them that it is most fitting in many respects that they should apply to him.

As it is possible, however, that this business may come before you, I think it a duty to convey some observations which occur to me, and which may not perhaps strike you, because matters of that sort have not, I believe, much occupied your attention. Previous thereto I beg leave, however, to give you a history of my acquaintance with it. In a letter to Colonel Hamilton, of the 31st of January, 1790, I mentioned what had passed between M. Necker and me respecting the debt due by the United States to France, and I hinted the means of turning to useful account a very precipitate step of the public agents in Holland. About this time I received your orders to communicate with the British ministers, and although I did by no means consider that in the

of duty on American ships, without any particular object except to punish Lafayette. This may seem a strange reason, but it is a true one. The Aristocrats, as such, are his enemies, and those who wished to preserve the valuable revenue upon tobacco were mortified, at seeing it thrown away in the manner I have related. Some of my particular acquaintances in the 'Assembly, to whom I mentioned the ill policy of these decrees, assured me that they would not have been passed had Monsieur de Lafayette, who was present, opposed them; but he being there, they left him to step forward, it being as it were his particular business; and he being silent, they were taken by surprise, whereas had he been absent they would certainly have made head, and obtained an adjournment at least. The exclusion of our ships, also, from being admitted as French bottoms, arises from the same desire to show that his support of America is useless, and at the same time they have circulated that he prefers America to France, in consequence of which he is afraid to do anything pointed, lest he should lose his popularity.'

light of an appointment to office, yet from motives of delicacy I determined to extricate myself from the affairs of the debt, as speedily as I could with propriety. Various applications were made to me from different quarters, to which I replied evasively; but in my arrival in this city last November, I informed the parties that I had reasons of a private nature, which deterred me from holding any share in their speculation. I conversed with Mr Short on the same subject, and communicated to him confidentially my reasons for declining an interest, as well as my opinion respecting the use which might be derived from such negotiation.

A few days after the President of the Committee of Finance, happening to meet me at the Count de Montmorin's, mentioned some proposals then before them, which to the best of my remembrance were extravagant. I declined giving an opinion without previously seeing and considering the terms, upon which he and M. de Montmorin agreed together, that before anything was concluded the various propositions which might be made should be submitted to my examination. Here the thing dropped, and the enclosed papers show the reason why, for it appears from them that a bargain was made shortly after by the *Contrôleur Général* with a different company. Mr Short mentioned this to me on his return hither in the end of March, telling me that the parties concerned were, as he was informed in Amsterdam, men of no credit nor capital. I of course agreed with him in opinion, that if so, it was not worth while to listen to them.

A few days after one of them called on me, and after giving a history of the affair, begged me to make use of my good offices. I told him at once that it was ridiculous to ask a commission of five per cent on changing the nature of our debt. That it was quite as convenient to owe France as to owe the subjects of France; and further, that before any treaty was offered, persons of credit and capital should appear. As soon as I made this last observation, he drew out the letter of the Comptroller General, and showing me the second clause of it,

replied, that after what was there contained no man had a right to question the solidity of the society. He then added, that for my private satisfaction he would prove that people of the first fortune were connected therein, and indeed he gave me such proof. I told him upon this, that they must apply to Mr Short, or to their own ministry, whose support would be much more efficacious than the sentiments of any private individual. I mentioned nevertheless to Mr Short the substance of this conversation. While he was in the country the enclosed letter was received. He returned to town yesterday, and called on me in the evening, when I communicated to him the purport of it.

I have ever been of opinion, that as we are not in condition to pay our debt to France, a bargain by which the period can be prolonged, without loss to either party, is desirable. I say without loss, because the conduct of this nation has been so generous to us, that it would be very ungrateful indeed to take advantage of those necessities, which the succor afforded to America has occasioned. Such bargain must be either with the government or with individuals. But after the repeated delays on our part, to ask longer time would not look well. Indeed no such treaty could be made without the consent of the Assembly, and their observations would not be pleasant. A bargain with individuals has the advantage of bringing in the aid of private interest to the support of our credit, and what is of very great consequence, it would leave us at liberty to make use of that credit for the arrangement of our domestic affairs. And on this head I must mention to you, my dear Sir, that it has been my good fortune to prevent some publications, which would have been particularly injurious to us. Their object was to complain of the United States for speculating in their own effects with the funds of France; urging that while we owed heavy instalments already due here, all the loans we obtain in Holland ought to be applied to the discharge of them, and therefore that the speculations in our domestic debt were a double violation of good faith, &c. &c.

The present state of things here has occasioned so great a fall in the exchange, that money borrowed in Holland is remitted with great gain, consequently loans made there just now answer well, and it is evident that the parties, who are endeavoring to contract, count on a considerable profit from that circumstance. Much however is to be said on this part of the subject.

First, it is questionable whether our reputation may not be a little affected, for you will recollect that about one third of our debt to France arose from a loan made on our account in Holland of five millions of florins, for which the King paid us here ten millions of livres, without any deduction for charges of any sort. The nation is now obliged to pay this five millions in Holland, and for us to borrow that amount there, and then squeeze them in an exchange, which distresses both their commerce and finances, looks hard. There was a good deal of murmuring about it when the last operation of 1,500,000 guilders took place, and I should not be at all surprised if some *patriot*, by way of showing his zeal, should make a violent attack in the Assembly when the next payment is made. There are many of these patriots, who if they can inculcate ministers and distress those of different sentiments, do not care a jot for consequences.

But supposing this not to happen, it is not possible for a nation to make the advantage, which individuals do in such things, because they must employ individuals, each of whom will be too apt to look a little to his own advantage. There is a difference also between the gain made upon parts, and that which would arise on the whole, for even if we could borrow all at once so large a sum, there can be no doubt that the remittance of it hither would greatly alter the exchange. But it is not possible to borrow it speedily, and the present unnatural state of things will, in all probability, be changed. In fact the leading characters are very seriously alarmed at it. If their paper currency should be either redeemed, or annihilated, or abolished tomorrow, the exchange would immediately turn in favor of France, and then we should lose on remittances.

So much for this affair in its little details; but there is a great view of it, which forcibly strikes my mind. If we were at liberty to turn all our efforts towards our domestic debt, we should by raising its value prevent speculations, which are very injurious to the country, if not to the government. Millions have already been bought at a low price, and afterwards negotiated in Europe. Neither^o is that all, for if we can borrow at five per cent and buy up our six per cent debt at par, we gain at once by that operation one fifth of the interest, or twenty per cent, which, besides all the other good consequences, is much more than ever we shall get by any management of our debts on this side of the water.

I have given you, my dear Sir, these hints in abridgement, because my time will not admit of dilating them; attribute them, I pray you, to the true cause, and believe me always very sincerely yours,

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

Paris, July 16th, 1791.

My Dear Friend,

My last was from London of the twenty-eighth of June. The latest I have received from you is of the third of May. You will have heard, through various channels, of the King's escape from the Tuileries. By the bye, he was said to be in perfect *liberty* there; but yet our good friend Lafayette was very near being hanged because he got away, and his justification tends to show, that his Majesty, besides his parole given, was so closely watched that he had but little chance of getting off unobserved.

This step was a very foolish one. Public affairs were in such a situation, that, if he had been quiet, he would have soon been master, because the anarchy, which prevails, would have shown the necessity of conferring more authority, and because

it is not possible so to balance a single Assembly against a Prince, but that one must prove too heavy for the other, or too light for the business.

The Assembly also, very strongly suspected of corrupt practices, was falling fast in the public estimation. His departure changed everything; and now the general wish seems to be for a republic, which is quite in the natural order of things. Yesterday the Assembly decreed, that the King, being inviolable, could not be involved in the accusations to be made against those concerned in his evasion. This has excited much heat against them. The people are now assembling on the occasion, and the militia (many of them opposed to the King) are out. As I lodge near the Tuileries, it is far from improbable, that I shall have a battle under my windows. The vanguard of the populace is to be formed by two or three thousand women. A good smart action would, I think, be useful rather than pernicious.

But the great evil arises from a cause not easily removed. It will, I think, be scarcely possible to confer authority on, or in other words to obtain obedience for, a man, who has entirely forfeited the public opinion; and, if they lay him aside, I do not see how they are to manage a regency. His brothers are abroad, and so is the Prince of Condé. The Duke of Orleans is loaded with universal contempt; and if they should name a council of regency, they would be obliged to take either feeble or suspected characters. Add to this the struggle, which must arise in a state where there is a King dethroned, and that for trivial causes. At the same time, the state of their finances is detestable, and growing worse every day. They have passed a law against emigrations, although by their bill of rights, every man has a right to go where he pleases. But this, you know, is the usual fate of bills of rights. How long the restrictions may continue is uncertain. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

Paris, July 20th, 1791.

My Dear Friend,

My last was of the sixteenth. The riot of that day went off pretty easily, but the next morning two men were *lanterned* and mangled in the Parisian taste. This occasioned some little stir. There had been a pretty general summons to the friends of liberty, requesting them to meet in the Champ de Mars. The object of this meeting was to persuade the Assembly, by the gentle influence of the cord, to undo what they had done respecting the imprisoned monarch. As the different ministers and municipal officers had received it in charge from the Assembly, to maintain peace and see to the execution of the laws, they made proclamation and displayed the red flag.

In coming from the British Ambassador's, about seven in the evening, I met a detachment of the militia with the red flag flying, and some of the civil officers. I went shortly afterwards to a height to see the battle; but it was over before I got to the ground; for as the militia would not, as usual, ground their arms on receiving the word of command from the mob, this last began, according to custom, to pelt them with stones. It was hot weather, and Sunday afternoon, for which time, according to usage immemorial, the inhabitants of this capital have generally some pleasurable engagement. To be disappointed in their amusement, to be paraded through the streets under a scorching sun, and then stand like holiday turkeys to be knocked down by brickbats, was a little more than they had patience to bear; so that, without waiting for orders, they fired and killed a dozen or two of the ragged regiment. The rest ran off like lusty fellows.

If the militia had waited for orders, they might, I fancy, have been all knocked down, before they received any. As it is, the business went off pretty easily. Some of them have since been assassinated, but not above five or six, as far as I

can learn. Lafayette was very near being killed in the morning ; but the pistol snapped at his breast. The assassin was immediately secured, but he ordered him to be discharged. These are things on which no comment is necessary. I think we shall be quiet here a little while ; but it is possible enough, that seizing some plausible occasion, a violent effort will be made, and then, if the militia succeed, order will be established. Adieu. I am very truly and affectionately yours,

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

GEORGE WASHINGTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Philadelphia, July 28th, 1791.

Dear Sir,

The communications in your several letters, relative to the state of affairs in Europe, are very gratefully received ; and I should be glad if it were in my power to reply to them more in detail than I am able to do. But my public duties, which are at all times sufficiently numerous, being now much accumulated by an absence of more than three months from the seat of government, make the present a very busy moment for me.

The change of systems, which have so long prevailed in Europe, will, undoubtedly, affect us in a degree proportioned to our political or commercial connexions with the several nations of it. But I trust we shall never so far lose sight of our own interest and happiness as to become, unnecessarily, a party in their political disputes. Our local situation enables us to maintain that state, with respect to them, which otherwise could not, perhaps, be preserved by human wisdom. The present moment seems pregnant with great events ; but, as you observe, it is beyond the ken of mortal foresight to determine what will be the result of those changes, which are either making, or contemplated, in the general system of Europe. Although as fellow men we sincerely lament the disorders, oppressions, and incertitude, which frequently attend national

events, and which our European brethren must feel, yet we cannot but hope, that it will terminate very much in favor of the rights of man. And that a change there, will be favorable to this country, I have no doubt. For under the former system we were seen either in the distresses of war, or viewed after the peace in a most unfavorable light through the medium of our distracted state. In neither point could we appear of much consequence among nations. And should affairs continue in Europe in the same state they were, when these impressions respecting us were received, it would not be an easy matter to remove the prejudices imbibed against us. A change of system will open a new view of things, and we shall then burst upon them, as it were, with redoubled advantages.

Should we, under the present state of affairs, form connexions, other than we now have, with any European powers, much must be considered in effecting them, on the score of our increasing importance as a nation ; and at the same time, should a treaty be formed with a nation, whose circumstances may not at this moment be very bright, much delicacy would be necessary in order to show that no undue advantages were taken on that account. For unless treaties are mutually beneficial to the parties, it is vain to hope for a continuance of them beyond the moment when the one, which conceives itself overreached, is in a situation to break off the connexion. And I believe it is among nations as with individuals, that the party taking advantage of the distresses of another will lose infinitely more in the opinion of mankind, and in subsequent events, than it will gain by the stroke of the moment.

In my late tour through the southern States, I experienced great satisfaction in seeing the good effects of the general government in that part of the union. The people at large have felt the security which it gives, and the equal justice which it administers to them. The farmer, the merchant, and the mechanic have seen their several interests attended to, and from thence they unite in placing a confidence in their representatives, as well as in those in whose hands the execution of

the laws is placed. Industry has there taken place of idleness, and economy of dissipation. Two or three years of good crops, and a ready market for the produce of their lands, have put every one in good humor; and in some instances they even impute to the government what is due only to the goodness of Providence.

The establishment of public credit is an immense point gained in our national concerns. This, I believe, exceeds the expectation of the most sanguine among us. And a late instance, unparalleled in this country, has been given of the confidence reposed in our measures, by the rapidity with which the subscriptions to the Bank of the United States were filled. In two hours after the books were opened by the commissioners, the whole number of shares was taken up, and four thousand more applied for, than were allowed by the institution; besides a number of subscriptions which were coming on. This circumstance was not only pleasing, as it related to the confidence in government, but as it exhibited an unexpected proof of the resources of our citizens.

In one of my letters to you, the account of the number of inhabitants, which would probably be found in the United States on enumeration, was too large. The estimate was then founded on the ideas held out by the gentlemen in Congress of the population of the several States, each of whom (as was very natural) looking through a magnifier would speak of the greatest extent, to which there was any probability of their numbers reaching. Returns of the census have already been made from several of the States, and a tolerably just estimate has been now formed in others; by which it appears, that we shall hardly reach four millions; but this you are to take along with it, that the *real* number will greatly exceed the *official* return; because, from religious scruples, some would not give in their lists; from an apprehension that it was intended as the foundation of a tax, others concealed, or diminished theirs; and from the indolence of the mass, and want of activity in many of the deputy enumerators, numbers are omitted. The

authenticated number will, however, be far greater, I believe, than has ever been allowed in Europe ; and will have no small influence in enabling them to form a more just opinion of our present growing importance, than has yet been entertained there.

This letter goes with one from the Secretary of State, to which I must refer you for what respects your public transactions, and I shall only add to it the repeated assurances of regard and affection, with which I am, dear Sir,

Your obedient and obliged,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, September 30th, 1791.

Dear Sir,

Mr Short has delivered to me within these few days your favor of the twenty-eighth of July. I cannot express to you what I felt on reading it. The view which it gives of our prosperity as a nation swelled my bosom with emotions, which none can know but those who have experienced them. The wonderful change, which has been effected in our affairs by the operation of the general government, has exceeded the predictions of its warmest friends. How great a source of joy is this to those, who have been at all instrumental in its formation and establishment ; those especially to whom Providence in its bounty has imparted a sincere affection for their fellow men. Yes, my dear Sir, man is not merely a selfish, nor a material being, and I attest your heart to witness the truth from the conviction of its own feelings.

The King has at length, as you will have seen, accepted the new constitution, and been in consequence liberated from his arrest. It is a general and almost universal conviction that this constitution is *inexcutable*. The makers to a man condemn it. Judge what must be the opinion of others. Mr Short will doubtless

forward all the public documents respecting it, and therefore I shall not trouble you with any of them. His majesty is to go in about an hour hence to close the session of the National Assembly, and then they leave the field to their successors. His present business is to make himself popular; indeed his life and crown depend upon it; for the constitution is such, that he must soon be more or less than he is at present, and fortunately he begins to think so, but unfortunately his advisers have neither the sense nor the spirit, which the occasion calls for.

The new Assembly, as far as can at present be determined, is deeply imbued with republican or rather democratical principles. The southern part of this kingdom is in the same disposition. The northern is ecclesiastical in its temper. The eastern is attached to Germany, and would gladly be reunited to the empire. Normandy is aristocratical, and so is part of Britany. The interior part of the kingdom is monarchical. This map is (you may rely on it) just, for it is the result of great and expensive investigations made by government, and I think you will be able by the help of it, and of the few observations which precede it, fully to understand many things, which would not otherwise perhaps be so easily unriddled. You doubtless recollect that the now expiring Assembly was convened to arrange the finances, and you will perhaps be surprised to learn, that after consuming church property to the amount of one hundred millions sterling, they leave this department much worse than they found it. Such however is the fact, and the chance now is, in my opinion, rather for than against a bankruptcy.

The aristocrats, who are gone and going in great numbers to join the refugee princes, believe sincerely in a coalition of the powers of Europe to reinstate their sovereign in his ancient authorities; but I believe they are very much mistaken. Nothing of consequence can be attempted this year, and many things may happen before the month of June next, were the several potentates in earnest. I am led to imagine, that their views are very different from those which are now assigned to them, and

it is very far from impossible that the attempt, if any, will, so far as France is concerned, be confined to a dismemberment.

The weak side of this kingdom, as matters now stand, is Flanders; but were the provinces of Alsace, Lorraine, French Flanders, and Artois rent away, the capital would be constantly exposed to the visits from an enemy. These provinces were, you know, acquired at an immense expense of blood and treasure, and if Louis the Fourteenth could have succeeded in making the Rhine his boundary, from Switzerland to the ocean, he would have obtained the advantages almost of an insular position. Indeed it is difficult to abstain from the wish, that the countries included within that boundary were united under a free efficient government, since it would, in all human probability, be the means of dispensing the blessings of freedom in no distant period to all Europe. But on this subject it is now permitted to a rational being to form rather wishes than hopes, much less expectations.

I will enclose herein a note just now received of the latest intelligence from Coblenz. It is written by the Prince de Condé to his confidential friend here, and is accompanied by the request that all French gentlemen, capable of actual service, will immediately repair to the standard of royalty beyond the Rhine, or rather on the banks of that river. To the troops mentioned in this note are added by the counter revolutionists here 15,000 Hessians and 16,000 French refugees, so that exclusively of what the Emperor may bring forward, they muster an army, *on paper*, of 100,000 men. The Emperor has about 5,000 men in the low countries. But all these appearances, and the proposed Congress of Ambassadors at Aix la Chapelle, do not in the least change my opinion, that nothing serious will be attempted this year.

M. de Montmorin has resigned, and the Count de Moustier is named as his successor, but whether he will accept seems to be very doubtful. He is now at Berlin, and as he is an intimate of M. de Calonne, who is one mainspring of the counter revolution, he is, I presume, in the secret of what may be

really in agitation. This on one side ; and on the other an office, the power and authority of which are just nothing at all ; for you will observe, that by the new constitution every treaty and convention whatever must be submitted to the investigation of the Assembly to be by them accepted or rejected.

You will have seen I suppose, ere this arrives, what has been done here respecting the colonies. It is supposed that they will be perfectly satisfied, because their internal legislation is left to themselves ; but I much doubt this, for their commerce, which involves their existence, is left entirely at the mercy of the Assembly, which will not be over attentive to their interests, when they fall into competition with those of the mother country.

I send out to Mr Morris a bundle of pamphlets written here by a M. de Corméré, according to hints and observations which I furnished to him. Mr Morris will give you one, and you will see that it was calculated to produce a liberal system of colonial government, beneficial to them and to us. In order to bring it about, it was proposed that commissioners should be sent out with full powers to treat with the colonial Assemblies, and could that have been carried, this pamphlet would have been the groundwork of the instructions. The proposition was rejected, but as it is more than probable, that the colonies will have had a full taste of the sweets of free trade before the troubles are composed, and as they will have learnt that fear can produce what reason could not, I do expect that at length this government must come into some such measure, and thereby not only the stumbling block will be taken out of the way to a useful treaty between France and the United States, but at the same time, and by the same means, the road will be laid open for solid connexion with Great Britain.

In all cases we have the consolation, that if the powers of Europe by their excluding principles deprive us of the needful vent for our produce, which becomes daily more and more abundant, we shall, from the cheapness of living and of raw materials, which results from that circumstance, make great and

rapid progress in useful manufactures. This alone is wanting to complete our independence. We shall then be, as it were, a world by ourselves, and far from the jars and wars of Europe, their various revolutions will serve merely to instruct and amuse ; like the roaring of a tempestuous sea, which at a certain distance becomes a pleasing sound.

Farewell, my dear Sir ; that you may be well and happy is the sincere wish of yours, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, October 3d, 1791.

Dear Sir,

I am favored with yours of the twenty-sixth of July, * for which I pray you to accept my thanks. I mentioned to you from London, that Mr Walpole had been offered the place of Envoy Extraordinary to the United States, which he had refused. I took care to avoid any sort of intercourse with the government while I was there, and of course could not possess any minute information worthy of your notice. I avoided also seeing any of the chiefs of oppositlon, lest some conclusions of a disagreeable nature should be drawn from that circumstance. Of course it was not until my arrival in this city, that I learnt (from the British Ambassador here) what had been done. Mr Hammond was sent for from Spain, and passed through this city while I was in London. I do not know whether he is gone out ; if not, you have long since I suppose received the communication of his appointment. The plan seems to have been that which I long since mentioned, viz. the sending out a minister with letters of credence in his pocket, to be delivered when you shall appoint one to their court.

From a variety of small circumstances I am convinced, that

* See Jefferson's Writings, Vol. iii. p. 115.

the British cabinet begins very seriously to consider its situation in respect to us. The rapid rise of our credit, the wise decisions of our courts, the general peace and order which prevail, and the gradual display of our population, wealth, and industry, produce very great effect upon their minds. Let me add that the calm dignity of those, who are at the head of our affairs, has a considerable influence. Events confirm me in the opinion, which I formed from an attentive consideration of the subject, and I think we may calculate almost with certainty on forming a good treaty with that country, as soon as they shall determine to form any treaty; and until that time, I agree fully with you, that attempts on our part should be such only, as to justify to the world that conduct which it becomes us to pursue. I know that among the many, whose duty or occupation it may be to consider this subject, there must be a variety of opinions, because dispositions differ, because prejudices exist, because interests sway, in a word, because men are men; but Time will set his seal of truth on that which is right. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

Paris, October 10th, 1791.

My Dear Friend,

The people of this city are become wonderfully fond of the King, and have a thorough contempt for the Assembly, who are, in general, what used to be called in Philadelphia, *the blue stockings*. There is, however, this difference between the two capitals, that with you virtuous poverty is respected, but here splendor is indispensable. Judge the consequence, and to enlighten that judgment, know that at this moment they stand on the brink of bankruptcy, which can only be avoided by increasing the vigor of the executive magistrate. This becomes daily more and more apparent; and Paris exists, as it were, on the interest of the national debt.

These facts will enable you to understand, why the other evening at the Italian comedy, as it is called, the *parterre*, or people, cried out continually *Vive le Roy; Vive la Reine; Vive la famille royale.*—*Sire, vive votre Majesté.* These words, *Sire* and *Majesté*, were, you know, proscribed by the Assembly, which was obliged, by a strong expression of the popular sentiment, to retract that decree the very next day. A patriot, in the midst of this acclamation, took it into his head to cry *Vive la Nation*,—but the rest silenced him immediately.

Now, my dear friend, this is the very same people who, when the King was brought back from his excursion, whipped a democratical Dutchess of my acquaintance, because they heard only the last part of what she said, which was, *Il ne faut pas dire, vive le Roi.* She had the good sense to desire the gentleman, who was with her, to leave her. Whipping is, you know, an operation which a lady would rather undergo among strangers, than before her acquaintance.

The provinces are not as yet in the same disposition with the capital, and I think they will not be so for a long time to come. But accidents may happen to change either the one or the other, and it is difficult to decide with precision on a people and situation so fluctuating and inconstant. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, December 27th, 1791.

Dear Sir,

Your favor of the 12th of September reached me a few days ago. In the proposition of S. J. and Co. I saw the means of saving somewhat to the United States, without incurring the odium of a payment in depreciated paper; but since a determination to pay in value is adopted, I heartily and entirely approve of the rejection of their offer.

Before the receipt of your letter Mr Short communicated to me, in general terms, the intention to make good the depreciation on the money paid here before, and told me at the same time that it seemed to be in contemplation to pay in specie, about which he felt himself much embarrassed; for in that case there would be a loss of about five per cent, which, with the commissions on loans, &c. &c. would increase the debt about one tenth, instead of paying it with advantage. And this arises from a circumstance which is, I believe, the common attendant of paper money, viz. that specie is higher in proportion than foreign exchanges.

This will be best understood by assigning what I conceive to be the cause of that difference. I begin by rejecting the theories of speculative men, who suppose that bills of exchange are drawn and purchased for payment of reciprocal debts, and the like. I reject equally the stock-jobbing operations of bankers, and confining my view to the ordinary course of things, I observe, that when a man purchases in France goods which are to be sold in England, he pays for those goods by the proceeds of bills drawn on England, and as he makes the acquisition of the goods with a view to the future sales, he governs himself by the usual price of such goods in the country to which they are to be sent.

The rate of exchange, therefore, enters into his consideration only so far as by means thereof the price he is to pay for his goods may be affected. On the other hand, he who has bought goods on credit in England, which he vends in France, regards the exchange only in so far as it governs the price at which he must sell his goods. Thus the pound sterling being worth about twenty-five livres, if the exchange is at thirty livres for the pound sterling, he must advance one fifth, or twenty per cent on the price of English goods; and for the same reason, the English agent can afford to give an advance of twenty per cent on French wines. Now in proportion as the price of English goods advances, the consumption of them lessens, and consequently the purchase of bills on London to

pay for them diminishes ; and in proportion as the exchange advances, which is of course a decrease in the the real price of French goods, the purchase of them increases, and of course the sale of bills on London to pay for them, and thus the depreciation of the paper currency checks, by eventual operation, its immediate effect on foreign exchange.

But the price of specie depends on a different cause. Specie, in a time of peace and good government, is but the sign of wealth, and not the substance ; so that no more of it is found in a country, than is necessary for the interchange of those commodities, which form the real wealth of such country. And by the bye it follows, that in proportion to the degree of credit resulting from a vigorous execution of good laws, the necessity of money decreases, and it becomes plentiful by the prevalence of confusion, without any actual increase or decrease of the mass. But when a paper circulation is forced forward, prudent men first, and all men afterwards, desire to realize this property. Land is not always a convenient object for this purpose, because the subsequent sale is difficult, and merchandises are objectionable from their bulk and decay. The precious metals, therefore, naturally obtain a preference, and as their quantity is by no means proportionate to the real wealth of the country, their price is increased more rapidly than that of other things. But the foreign merchant, observing this advance, declines drawing bills unless he can get something near the price which his coin, if brought into the country, would produce, and thus the exchange follows the price of coin in the course of depreciation instead of preceding it. If I were to hazard a conjecture, as to the corollary of this reasoning, it would be that the quantity of the precious metals rather increases than diminishes in a country where paper money circulates.

I make no apology for this digression, because if it conveys no information, it tends at least to explain one fact, and to place some others in a different light from that in which they are usually viewed. To return then to the subject of your let-

ter, I must tell you, that about the same time that Mr Short's despatches arrived, a plan was imagined by the colonists of St Domingo and proposed to the administration, for repairing the ravages committed by their slaves in the late insurrection, by appropriating to that purpose the debt of the United States to France. One of them came to converse with me on the subject ; but supposing it to be some new scheme of speculation, I refused to listen to him. A few days after, however, the Minister of the Marine told me that he had sent him, and desired me to consider the matter and see if something could not be done. In consequence of this I mentioned to Mr Short, who is now in Holland, a plan which appeared to me useful to the two countries ; and before his departure we agreed on certain principles to govern in that business, conformably to which the minister is now acting. I shall send you his address to the Assembly on the subject, and if the thing he has in view is effected, I will detail it to you ; if not, I will spare you the perusal of so much useless writing.

As to the state of things here, I would convey it to you as fully as propriety will admit ; but I know not yet by what opportunity this letter will go, and the Post Office was never more abused under the most despotic ministers than it is at present, notwithstanding the decrees to the contrary. Every letter I receive bears evident marks of *patriotic* curiosity. This anxious spirit of pettifogging villany proves the fear of those who make use of it ; and truly they have reason to fear, for every day proves more clearly that their new constitution is good for nothing.

Those, whom I had warned in season of the mischiefs they were preparing, endeavor, now that it is too late, to lay the blame on others by way of excusing themselves, but the truth is that instead of seeking the public good by doing what was right, each sought his own advantage by flattering the public opinion. They dare not now propose the amendments, which they perceive and acknowledge to be indispensable. They have besides no confidence in each other, for every one feels

a reason against it, and meets moreover with daily proofs that his copatriots are no better than himself.

The Assembly (as you who know such bodies will naturally suppose) commits every day new follies, and if this unhappy country be not plunged anew into the horrors of despotism, it is not their fault. They have lately made a master stroke to that effect. They have resolved to attack their neighbors, unless they dissipate the assemblies of French emigrants, who have taken refuge in their dominions. These neighbors are members of the German Empire, and France threatens to carry into their country, not fire and sword, but *la liberté*. Now as this last word does not, in the acceptance of German courts, mean so much *liberty* as *insurrection*, you will see that the *pre-text* is given for hostilities without violating the law of nations.

Add to this, that three French armies of fifty thousand men each are ordered to assemble on the frontiers. One under your old acquaintance Rochambeau, in Flanders; one under our friend Lafayette in Lorraine, so as to penetrate by the Moselle river into the electorate of Treves; and one under a Monsieur Luckner in Alsace. This last I am told has but slender abilities; the other two you are acquainted with. Putting all other things out of the question it is self-evident, that the Empire must bring force to oppose force thus ordered, and in consequence it is not to be doubted, that fifty thousand Prussian and fifty thousand Austrian troops will make their appearance as speedily as circumstances can permit.

Now I am thoroughly convinced, that if this country were *united under a good government*, and in peace with England, they could set the rest of Europe at defiance; but you have no idea, my dear Sir, of a society so loosely organized. America in the worst of times was much better, because at least the criminal law was executed, not to mention the mildness of our manners. My letters predicting their present situation may perhaps have appeared like the wanderings of exaggerated fancy, but believe me, they are within the coldest limits of truth. Their army is undisciplined to a degree you can hardly con-

ceive. Already great numbers desert to what they expect will become the enemy. Their *Gardes Nationales*, who have turned out as volunteers, are in many instances that corrupted scum of overgrown population, of which large cities purge themselves, and which, without constitution to support the fatigues, or courage to encounter the perils of war, have every vice and every disease, which can render them the scourge of their friends and the scoff of their foes.

The finances are so deplorably bad, that the bankruptcy, which actually exist by the depreciation of the paper money, must soon be declared by stopping payment in some quarter or other, unless those effectual remedies be applied, which seem to be beyond the power of the government, and beyond the talents of those who administer it. The discontent is general, but it does not break out, partly because the antipathy to the *Aristocrats*, and the fear of their tyranny still operates, and partly because no safe opportunity offers. Every one is bewildered in his meditations as to the event, and like a fleet at anchor in a fog, no one will set sail for fear of running foul.

If they come to blows on the borders a curious scene will, I think, present itself. The first success on either side will decide the opinions of a vast number, who have in fact no opinion, but only the *virtuous* determination to adhere to the strongest party; and you may rely on it, that if the enemy be tolerably successful, a person who shall visit this country two years hence will inquire with astonishment by what means a nation, which in the year 1788 was devoted to its King, became in 1790 unanimous in throwing off authority, and in 1792 as unanimous in submitting to it. The reasons are given to you in my letter of the 29th April, 1789, and my fears expressed in that letter seem now to be on the eve of reality. The King means well, and may perhaps by his moderation finally succeed in saving his country. I hope much from this circumstance; but, alas, the moderation of one who has been so wounded, so insulted, seems to be but a slender dependence, and yet I verily believe it to be the best, and I had almost said the only dependence.

December 31st.

A courier arrived last night with despatches, which are to be communicated to the Assembly this morning. The Emperor informs the King, that he has given orders to General Bender, who commands in the Low Countries, to protect the electorate of Treves with all his forces. I did not mention, as I ought to have done, that the courts of Berlin and Vienna have concluded a treaty *for the protection of the German Empire and maintenance of its rights*. You will have seen that the Emperor, having adopted the determination of the Diet respecting the claims of those princes, who have certain feudal rights preserved to them by the treaty of Westphalia in Alsace and Lorraine, reminded the King, that the dominion of France over those provinces is conceded by that treaty.

The Dutch government has proposed a treaty with the Emperor, as sovereign of the Low Countries, for mutual aid and protection, in case of insurrections, which offer is accepted.

All this is explained by the intrigues of France to excite revolt in Holland and Flanders, and the completion of such a treaty will place the Emperor at ease, should he operate against this country next spring. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

London, February 4th, 1792.

Dear Sir,

I wrote to you on the twenty-seventh of December, but there were many things which I did not write, and some of them I will now communicate. At the close of the session of the first National Assembly, a coalition was brought about between the *Jacobins* and the *Quatre-vingt-neufs*. It is proper to explain these terms. The *Jacobins*, so called from their meeting at a convent or church of that name, were then the *violent party*. The others, who took their name from a club instituted in the

year 1789, were those who termed themselves *moderate men*, friends to order, &c. &c. The death of Mirabeau, (who was beyond all controversy one of the most unprincipled scoundrels that ever lived,) left a great chasm in the latter party. He was then sold to the court, and meant to bring back absolute authority.

The chiefs of the *Jacobins* were violent, for two reasons. First, that the *Quatre-vingt-neufs* would not join with them seriously and heartily, wherefore not being able to make head alone, they were obliged to use the populace, and therefore to sacrifice to the populace. Secondly, that the objects of their desire were much greater, though more remote, than those of the other party; for these last had never sought in the revolution anything else, than to place themselves comfortably, whereas the *Jacobins* did really at first desire to establish a free constitution, in the expectation that sooner or later they should be at the head of it.

The Aristocrats, you will observe, were reduced to insignificancy before the others divided. That, you know, is a thing of course. You will remember, that the first Assembly had decreed that their members could neither hold any office under the crown, nor yet be chosen to represent the people. These decrees were partly the fruit of opposition between the two parties, and partly the result of suspicions, which they had both excited amongst the well meaning members of the Assembly. The first decree was of Jacobin parentage, to disappoint their enemies, who were upon the point of succeeding to office. The second decree was carried against the secret inclinations of both. But the consequence was, that each was seriously disappointed; and as the constitution was clearly unable to support itself, they began to perceive that its ruin might involve their own, and therefore they formed a coalition, in which each determined to make use of the other for its own purposes.

But you will say perhaps, that both together would be of little use; and this is true in a degree; for if the constitution had been a practicable thing, those alone who were in power

under it could have any real authority. But that was not the case, and therefore the plan of the *Allies* was to induce a belief in the court, that they alone had sufficient popularity in the nation to preserve the monarchical authority against the republican party, and on the other hand to convince the Assembly, that (having in their hands the royal authority) all favor, offices, and grants must come through them. Thus they constituted themselves, if I may be allowed the expression, the government brokers of the nation.

I have mentioned the *republican* party. This naturally grew up out of the old Jacobin sect ; for when the chiefs, finding that all was nearly ruined by the want of *authority*, had set themselves seriously at work to correct their own errors, many of their disciples, who believed what their apostles had preached, and many who saw in the establishment of order the loss of their consequence, determined to throw off all submission to crowned heads, as being unworthy of a free people. Add to this the number of 'moody beggars starving for a time of pell-mell havock and confusion.'

It was this coalition, which prevented the King from accepting the constitution in a *manly* manner, pointing out its capital faults, marking the probable consequences, calling on them to reconsider it, and declaring that his submission to their decisions arose from his belief, that it was the only means to avoid the horrors of civil war. They saw that this conduct would render them responsible, and although it was the most likely means of obtaining a good constitution at a future day, and would have bound the King down to the principles he should then advance, yet they opposed, because such good constitution would be established, not only without, but even against them, and would of course deprive them of those objects which they were in pursuit of. The King contended strongly for that kind of acceptance, which I have just mentioned, but he was borne down, being threatened with popular commotions fatal to himself and his family, and with that civil war which he most wished to avoid, as the necessary result of such fatal commotions.

Shortly after his acceptance it became necessary to appoint another minister of Foreign Affairs, Monsieur de Montmorin having insisted so strongly on retiring that the King could no longer, with any propriety, ask him to stay. The state of the ministry was then as follows. Monsieur Duport, the Keeper of the Seals, a creature of and sworn adherent to the Triumvirate; which Triumvirate is another Duport, Barnave, and Alexander Lameth, being the chiefs of the old Jacobins. I say the *old* Jacobins, for the present Jacobins are the republican party. This Keeper of the Seals constantly communicated everything that passed in council to his coadjutors. The Minister of the Interior, Monsieur Delessart, was a wavering creature, one of those of whom Shakspeare says that they ‘renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks with every gale and vary of their masters.’ He had been one of M. Necker’s underlings, was brought forward by him, and had connected himself with the Triumvirate, M. Necker’s enemies, as being the strongest party, but still kept up a good understanding with the others.

Duportail, the Minister at War, of whom I formerly spoke to you when he was appointed, and foretold the conduct he would pursue towards his creator, Monsieur de Lafayette, was also completely subservient to the Triumvirate. But at that time he was so much embroiled with the Assembly, that his speedy resignation seemed unavoidable. Monsieur Bertrand de Molleville had just been appointed to the Marine, an office which Monsieur de Bougainville had refused to accept. *He* was pushed to it by the *Quatre-vingt-neufs*, whom he despised, and told the King that he would not be member of a ministry, many of whom he knew to be unfaithful to him. Monsieur Bertrand was brought forward by the same influence, but he is really attached to the crown, wishes ardently to obtain a good constitution for his country, is an intelligent, sensible, and laborious man, formerly of the robe, and the particular friend of Monsieur de Montmorin.

I mentioned to you formerly that Monsieur de Choiseul had refused the office of Foreign Affairs. While it was in question

who should be appointed to succeed Monsieur de Montmorin, the King of his own head named the Count de Moustier, and wrote him a letter on the subject, which de Moustier has since shown to me. He had the prudence to write from Berlin to decline accepting, until after he should be in Paris. When he arrived in that city the King told him that he could not give him the office, because he was considered as an Aristocrat. You will observe that the coalition had been at work to get rid of him, and here I must make a digression. The plan was that as soon as circumstances would permit, a Minister at War should be appointed, faithful to the King, and then Bougainville take the Marine, Bertrand be appointed Keeper of the Seals, and Delessart either kept in or turned out, as he should behave. This plan was not known to the coalition at all, but they well knew that if de Moustier got into place, it would be a step towards the destruction of their influence and authority. They therefore assured the King, that they could not answer for consequences, threatened him with popular commotions, with opposition in the Assembly, and the like, so that at last he gave up his nomination and explained the matter to de Moustier. A long interregnum ensued in that office, and as Monsieur de Montmorin absolutely refused to continue any longer, the *Portefeuille* was given to Monsieur Delessart, and after some time the Count de Ségur was appointed.

He accepted in the belief of two things, in both of which he was mistaken. One, that he had the confidence of the King and Queen; but he had never taken the right way to obtain either their confidence, or that of others. The second article of his creed was, that the Triumvirate (his patrons) commanded a majority in the Assembly. He was undeceived as to the latter point immediately, and therefore threw up the office and went out of town. Under these circumstances Monsieur de Narbonne tried hard to obtain that place, and, as I have mentioned his name, and that of Monsieur de Choiseul, I will in this place mention that of the Abbé de Périgord, afterwards Bishop of Autun. These three are young men of high family, men of wit and men of pleasure; the two former were

men of fortune, but had spent it. They were intimates ; all three had run the career of ambition together to retrieve their affairs. On the score of morals neither of them is exemplary. The Bishop is particularly blamed on that head, for the variety and publicity of his amours, for gambling, and above all for stock-jobbing during the ministry of Monsieur de Calonne, with whom he was on the best terms, and therefore had opportunities which his enemies say he made no small use of. However I do not believe in this, and I think that except his gallantries, and a mode of thinking rather too liberal for a churchman, the charges are unduly aggravated.

It was by the Bishop's intrigues *principally*, that Monsieur de Choiseul was formerly nominated to the office of Foreign Affairs, but he preferred staying at Constantinople till he could see which way things would settle, and to that effect he prevailed on the Vizier, or rather the *Reis Effendi*, to write that he thought it much for the interest of France, that he should stay for three years longer in that city. In the beginning of the revolution, Narbonne, a great *Anti-neckerist*, was not a little opposed to it, and there was afterwards some coldness between him and the Bishop, partly on political accounts, and partly because he (in common with the rest of the world) believed the Bishop to be too well with his mistress. This coldness was however at length removed by the interference of their common friend, and the Bishop labored hard to get his friend de Narbonne appointed to the office of Foreign Affairs, but the King would not agree to it. M. Delessart was therefore appointed, he being very glad to get rid of the department of the Interior, where he had everything to apprehend from want of power, want of order, and want of bread. The next step was to bring Monsieur de Narbonne forward to fill the place of Monsieur Duportail, and to this M. Delessart gave his hearty assistance by way of compensating for the disappointment in the other department. Finally the Interior, or Home Department, was filled by a Monsieur Cahier de Gerville, of whom I know very little ; nor is it necessary that I should.

This ministry stands then divided as follows. The Keeper of Seals and M. Delessart are attached, or supposed to be so, to the Lameth faction, Monsieur de Narbonne and Monsieur Bertrand are supposed to be attached to the *Quatre-vingt-neufs*, and M. de Gerville rather leaning to the latter. This ministry, extremely disjointed in itself, and strongly opposed by the Assembly, possesses on the whole but a moderate share of talents, for though Count de Narbonne is a man of wit, and a very pleasant lively fellow, he is by no means a man of business; and though M. Bertrand has talents, yet according to the old proverb, one swallow never makes a summer.

Such as it is, every one of them is convinced that the constitution is good for nothing; and unfortunately they are many of them so indiscreet as to disclose that opinion, when at the same time they declare their determination to support and execute it, which is in fact the only rational mode, which now remains, of pointing out its defects. It is unnecessary to tell you, that some members of the National Assembly are in the pay of England, for that you will easily suppose. Brissot de Warville is said to be one of them, and indeed, (whether from corrupt or other motives I know not,) his conduct tends to injure his own country, and benefit that of their ancient foes in a very eminent degree.

The situation of their finances is such, that every considerate person sees the impossibility of going on in the present way; and as a change of system, after so many pompous declamations, is not a little dangerous among a people so wild and ungoverned, it has appeared to them that a war would furnish some plausible pretext for measures of a very decisive nature, in which state necessity will be urged in the teeth of policy, humanity, and justice. Others consider war as the means of obtaining for the government the eventual command of disciplined military force, which may be used to restore order, in other words to bring back despotism; and then they expect that the King will give the nation a constitution, which they have neither the wisdom to form nor the virtue to adopt for

themselves. Others again suppose that in case of a war there will be such a leaning from the King towards his brothers, from the Queen towards the Emperor, from the nobility (the very few) who remain towards the mass of their brethren, who have left the kingdom, that the bad success natural to arise from the opposition of undisciplined mobs to regular armies, may be easily imputed to treasonable counsels, and the people be prevailed on to banish them altogether, and set up a federal republic. Lastly, the Aristocrats burning with the lust of vengeance, most of them poor, and all of them proud, hope that, supported by foreign armies, they shall be able to return victorious and re-establish that species of despotism most suited to their own cupidity.

It happens, therefore, that the whole nation, though with different views, are desirous of war, for it is proper in such general statement to take in the spirit of the country, which has ever been warlike. I have told you long ago, that the Emperor is by no means an enterprising or warlike prince. I must now, in confirmation of that, inform you that in the famous conference at Pilnitz he was taken in by the King of Prussia, for he came prepared to higgie about the nature and extent of the succor to be given and forces to be employed; but the King cut the matter short by telling him, that the difference in the extent of their respective dominions, and a variety of other circumstances, would justify him in demanding greater efforts on the part of the Emperor, but that he would meet him on ground of perfect equality. In consequence of this the Emperor was obliged to accede, but he did so in the view and the wish to do nothing.

When therefore the King accepted the constitution, he chose to consider that as a reason why foreign Princes should not interfere. The King of Prussia, however, gave to the King *personal* assurances of his good will, and *brotherly* attachment, and of this offered *substantial proofs*. The King's true interest (and he thinks so) seems to consist in preserving the peace, and leaving the Assembly to act as they may think proper, which

will demonstrate the necessity of restoring in a great degree the royal authority. The faction opposed to him are very sensible of this, which forms an additional reason for driving everything to extremity; and therefore with a view to destroy every root and fibre of ancient systems, they have imagined to court the alliance of Great Britain and of Prussia. In consequence, the Bishop d'Autun has been sent to England, and if my information be good, is authorised to propose the cession of the Islands of France and Bourbon and the island of Tobago, as the price of an alliance against the Emperor.

This has a direct tendency to break the family compact with Spain, which has long been courted by Britain; for it is evident, that this country will not embark in a contest which is to do France any good, and therefore the game of Mr Pitt is as clear as the sun, and suits exactly his temper and disposition. He has only to receive the offers made, and send copies to Vienna and Madrid, by way of supporting his negotiations, particularly with the latter. He can offer them also the guarantee of their dominions and rights against us, and by this means we should find ourselves all at once surrounded by hostile nations. The minister of the Marine opposed violently in council this mission, stated the consequences, and obtained some useful restrictions. M. de Warville proposed in the Diplomatic Committee the cession of Dunkirk and Calais to England, as pledges of the fidelity of France to the engagements she might take. You will judge from this specimen of the wisdom and virtue of the faction to which he belongs, and I am sure the integrity of your heart will frown with indignant contempt when I tell you, that among the chiefs of that faction are men, who owe their all to the personal bounty of the King.

This mission of the Bishop d'Autun has produced something like a schism in the coalition. The party of Lameth and Barnave are strongly opposed to it. Monsieur Delessart, who had adopted the scheme on the representation of the Bishop (with whom it originated) and his friends, abandoned it on the representation of the others, and two days before I left Paris

an express was sent to assure the Emperor, that notwithstanding appearances they meant him no harm. In effect they were again going to endeavor at an alliance *of the nation* with him, upon a plan which was set on foot about three months ago by those, who afterwards fell into the plan of an alliance with Britain. You may judge from hence how much dependence is to be placed on these new fangled statesmen. The King and Queen are wounded to the soul by these rash measures. They have, I believe, given all needful assurances to the Emperor and King of Spain. A confidential person has desired me to assure you on their behalf, that they are very far from wishing to change the system of French politics and abandon their old allies, and therefore if any advantage is taken of the present advances to Britain, that you will consider them as originating merely in the madness of the moment ; and not as proceeding from *them*, or as meeting with *their* approbation, *but the contrary*. I shall send this letter in such a way, as promises the greatest safety, and I must entreat you, my dear Sir, to destroy it for fear of accidents ; you will feel how important it is to them, that this communication be not disclosed. It is merely personal from them to you, and expressive of sentiments which can have no action until they have some authority.

It is time to close this too long letter, whose object is to possess you of that interior machinery by which outward movements are directed. Believe always, I pray, in the sincerity of those sentiments with which I am yours,

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

London, February 15th, 1792.

My Dear Friend,

This letter will be in reply to what you have been so kind as to write respecting my nomination as minister to the court

of France. I feel as I ought the honor conferred by the President in making it, and whatever may be its fate in the Senate, I shall always count his suffrage among the most flattering events of my life. I find that no decision was made down to the evening of the ninth of January, though the first consideration was in the morning of the twenty-third of December, being in the whole eighteen days that it had hung by the eyelids. A mischievous consequence of the delay is, that foreign powers will suppose there is a great division of sentiment, and of course the Minister will have less weight, at least for some time, and if a bare majority should eventually approve, that circumstance also will operate in the same way. To obviate evil, so far as the other gentlemen may be concerned, I have declared here to those who have wondered at the delay, that I believe the exceptions, if any, are against me. It has been reported, that the exception was to making any appointment whatever; but I have declared my belief that this was not the case, for you will observe that such opinion presupposes that the President was precipitate, whereas the law passed on the subject is of long standing. On the whole, I have thought it best to make myself the scape goat of the flock, because if disapproved of, it will then appear all natural enough, and if appointed, I must work through the difficulties as well as I can; they will be less important to my country, on the other side of the channel, and my great object is her interest.

The mission to France must be a stormy one, let it fall on whom it may. You will have seen that every character, both in and out of that country, is very rudely handled by their journalists. These gentlemen stick not to declare that Monsieur de Lafayette is a mercenary traitor, sold to the Aristocratic faction. When such things are said, read, and believed by the vulgar, you will judge what likelihood there is that reason should be heard, or truth prevail. However, as mankind must in all countries come to their senses either sooner or later, there is no reason to doubt that a proper conduct will at length succeed.

You will observe, that it was not in the nature of things possible to make an appointment *from America*, which would have been unexceptionable, and to have made none would have been offensive, for the conclusion would have been that America looked with contempt at their present situation.

That kingdom is split up into parties, whose inveteracy of hatred is hardly conceivable, and the Royalists and Aristocrats consider America, and the Americans, as having occasioned their misfortunes. The former charge it upon us as ingratitude, seeing that it was the King who stepped forward to our relief. Should this party get the better in the struggle, there are very few Americans who would, for the present, be well received. On the other hand, the republicans consider everything short of downright democracy, as an abandonment of political principle, in an American. I could dwell minutely on both sides of this question; but a word to the wise is sufficient. To stand *well* with all parties is impossible, but it is possible, and merely so, to stand well with the best people in all parties, without greatly offending the others; and in order to do this, a man must make up his mind to hear the virtuous traduced by the wicked, and to listen unruffled to calumny, folly, and even to insanity. I am in hopes, however, that things will ere long come to some more steady bearing, though the present prospect is by no means flattering or fair. The Bishop d'Autun tells me that the ministry are all disjointed, each undermining the other, and the Assembly at war with them all. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

London, March 17th, 1792.

Dear Sir,

I had the honor to write to you on the fourth of last month. Two days after, I was informed that you had nominated me as minister to the court of France, but the latest advices from

America, which come down to the tenth of January, show that the Senate had not then made their decision. Be that decision what it may, I shall ever gratefully esteem and acknowledge this mark of confidence from the person in the world, whose good opinion I consider most estimable.

In my letter of the fourth, I gave you a picture of the French ministry, and a view of the measures pursued by different parties, including the mission of the Bishop d'Autun. As he has now got back to Paris, it may be well to communicate the result. His reception was bad, for three reasons. First, that the court looks with horror and apprehension at the scenes acting in France, of which they consider him as a prime mover. Secondly, that his reputation is offensive to persons, who pique themselves on decency of manners and deportment. And lastly, because he was so imprudent, when he first arrived, as to propagate the idea that he should corrupt the members of administration, and afterwards by keeping company with leading characters among the dissenters, and other similar circumstances, he renewed the impression made before his departure from Paris, that he meant to intrigue with the discontented. His public reception, however, furnishes no clue to decide on the success of his mission; because the former might have been very bad, and the latter very good.

The fact however is, that he could offer nothing worthy of their acceptance, and that what he asked was of a nature not to be granted. His offer was confined to the cession of Tobago, a demolition of the works of Cherbourg, and an extension of the commercial treaty. He asked a strict neutrality in case of war with the Emperor. Now you will observe, that no court could prudently treat with France in her present situation, seeing that nobody can promise in her name otherwise than as god-fathers and godmothers do at a christening; and how such promises are kept everybody knows. Convinced of this, the Bishop never told his errand to Lord Gower, the British Ambassador at Paris, who mentioned that circumstance to me as extraordinary, but yet so far agreeable, as that he was glad not to have been called on for letters of introduction.

Respecting Tobago I must make a digression. It is now a long time since it was mentioned to me in Paris, that some of the colonists of St Domingo had come hither to make overtures to Mr Pitt. Since that period, I learnt that the French ministry were in possession of documents to prove, not only that he fomented the disturbances in France, but that he was in deep intrigues with regard to that colony. The particular proofs were not shown to me, so that I cannot speak positively. Neither can I vouch for what I have learnt further on that subject within this month; but I am assured, that it is Mr Pitt's intention to bring about, if he can, the independence of St Domingo. Mr Clarkson, the great negro advocate, is mentioned to me as his agent for this business at Paris, and the conduct of a part of the Assembly, in opposing succor to that island, seems corroborative of such an idea. This then being the case, or supposing it to be so, the offer of Tobago was too trifling to attract Mr Pitt's notice, even if unconnected with other circumstances. By the bye, my informant tells me also, that Mr Pitt means to coax us into the adoption of his plan respecting St Domingo. And I learn from another quarter, that he means to offer us his mediation for a peace with the Indians. If all this be true, his game is evident. The mediation is to be with *us* a price for adopting his plans, and with the *Indian tribes* a means of constituting himself their patron and protector. It may be proper to combine all this with the late division of Canada, and the present measures for military colonization of the upper country, and above all with what may come from Mr Hammond.

I return to St Domingo. If such be Mr Pitt's scheme, although we shall not, I presume, engage in, or countenance it, yet the success will be entirely for our advantage, and a mere preliminary to something of the same sort, which must happen to Jamaica on the first change of wind in the political world. The destruction of the port of Cherburg is no present object with the British ministry, because they suppose it will be ruined by the elements before it can be completed;

and because the French Marine is, from the want of discipline, an object more of contempt than apprehension. The proffered extension of the commercial treaty amounts to nothing, because at present every part of France is open to contraband commerce, and because there is little reason to believe, that the stipulations in a treaty now made would be of any long duration.

Thus it happens that neither of the objects offered were worthy of notice. But the neutrality required was of a most important nature. By leaving the Austrian Low Countries exposed to French invasion, it would have been a violation both of ancient and of recent treaties. Nor is this all, for (as I have already had occasion to remark) the annexation of those provinces to the French monarchy would prove almost, if not altogether, fatal to Great Britain. And when we consider that they are almost in revolt already, and that it is in fact their interest to become one with France, there is reason to suppose that a union might have been effected, in case of a war with the Emperor.

So much then on the ground of good faith, and good policy. But there is still a farther cause, which, as the world goes, may be equal in its operation to all others. It seems to be a moot point whether it is the British or the Prussian cabinet which directs the other. Perhaps there may be a little of both; but be all that as it may, it is certain that neither feels disposed to counteract the views of its ally, in any open manner. Now putting aside the personal feelings, which naturally agitate the sovereign of this, as well as of other kingdoms, in regard to the French revolution; it is notorious that from the very dawn of it, agents were employed to foment a spirit of revolt in other States, particularly in Prussia. The king of Prussia therefore feels for the French revolutionists all the enmity of a proud, passionate, and offended German Prince. Add to this, that the Elector of Hanover, as such, cannot wish for a change in the government of Germany. If therefore it had been the interest of Great Britain to establish a free constitu-

tion in France, (which it certainly is not,) I am perfectly convinced that this court would never have made a single effort for the purpose.

I stated to you, in my last, that the French ministry are extremely disjointed. It was too much so for any durable existence, besides which, the members took effectual means to precipitate each other's ruin. M. de Narbonne wished to get into the office of Foreign Affairs. This was desirable to him, it is said, on many accounts, but particularly so because it gives the command of large sums without account. Whatever may have been his motives, the following seems to have been his conduct. He stood forth the advocate of all violent measures. This would naturally have excited suspicions with thinking men, but not so with the Assembly. He associated himself to the partizans of democracy, and while by these means he secured himself against their clamors, he took great care of his pecuniary affairs. This at least is affirmed to me, and with the addition that he had the imprudence to pay off his debts, although it is notorious that his estate, (which is in St Domingo,) is among those which are laid waste. It is further asserted, that in order to quiet the clamors of contractors who had given him money, and found themselves in the road to ruin, he agreed to compensate the depreciation of the *Assignats*. In order to remove a great obstacle to his proceedings, he joined in the intrigues against M. Bertrand, and at the same time fostered other intrigues against M. Delessart, with a view of getting his place. The proofs of all these things are said to be in the King's hands.

M. Delessart's conduct I have already in part communicated. I must add that, afterwards, imagining that Brissot de Warville and Condorcet were omnipotent in the Assembly, he violated his engagements made with the Triumvirate, and wrote some despatches conformably to the views of those two gentlemen. In consequence of this, it was resolved to displace him, and they were looking out for a successor. The person applied to was actually deliberating whether he should or should

not accept, at the moment when Brissot brought about his impeachment and arrest. In this same moment M. de Narbonne was dismissed, and with him was to go M. de Gerville. The Chevalier de Graave succeeds M. de Narbonne. When I left Paris he was attached to the Triumvirate. He does not want understanding, but I think it almost impossible that he should succeed. Monsieur Bertrand, against whom an address from the Assembly was at length carried, has, I find, resigned. There is something at the bottom, which I cannot discover, without being on the spot, but you may rely on it he goes out with the full confidence of the King and Queen.

My informations from Paris are previous to the news of the Emperor's death, which has probably occasioned the violent proceedings against poor Delessart, by removing the fears of those who, in the midst of all their big words, were confoundedly frightened. What may be the consequences of this event it is impossible to determine, or even to conjecture. Much, very much, depends on the personal character of his successor, which I am not yet acquainted with.

It is supposed by some here, that Mr Pitt is not strong in the cabinet at present, although the majority in Parliament was never more decisive, and this is said to arise from his refusing to ask money for the payment of the Prince of Wales's debts, which the King, it is said, was desirous of, and which his minister declined, with some offensive expressions. Mr Pitt's friends insist, on the other hand, that the whole story is false, from beginning to end. For my own part, I do not think he will be turned out, because I believe him to be very cunning, and although he has conducted Foreign Affairs but poorly, he manages all the little court and parliamentary intrigues with consummate address.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

London, March 21st, 1792.

Dear Sir,

Yesterday I was informed that the Senate had agreed to your nomination of diplomatic servants. If I know my own heart, this intelligence is far less agreeable to me on my own account than on that of the public. I am sure that a rejection, from whatever cause it may have arisen, would have been attributed to disunion in our counsels.

I find that the King of France has appointed to the office of Foreign Affairs a Monsieur Dumouriez, and that it is considered as a sacrifice to the Jacobins. He is a bold, determined man. I am not acquainted with him personally, but I know that he has long been seeking a place in the administration, and was, about six months ago, determined, if appointed one of the ministers, to destroy at the peril of his life the Jacobin and all other clubs, and to effect a change in the government. How far he may have changed his opinions since I really cannot tell, but I mention this to you *now*, because when I know more I can refer to this letter and say, that *by coming into office he has not changed his sentiments*, if he persists in those his ancient determinations. If not, I will tell you, that *he is more prudent than was supposed*. And these words will in either case mean nothing more than is here set down for them. The King consulted him (as I was told by his confidential friend in the middle of last October) on the state of affairs, when M. de Montmorin was out; but the high toned measures he proposed were not adopted.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

London, April 6th, 1792.

Dear Sir,

I had the honor to receive this morning your favor of the twenty-third of January,* with its enclosures, excepting the cypher which seems accidentally to have been omitted in making up your despatches, or perhaps it has been put by mistake in the letters directed to Mr Short, which at Mr Johnson's request I have taken charge of. I shall deliver it as speedily as may be, intending to make my arrangements for leaving this city as soon as the present holidays are over.

Nothing can be more just, than your observations respecting the propriety of preserving silence as to the government of France: and they are peculiarly applicable to the present state of things in that country. Changes are now so frequent, and events seem fast ripening to such awful catastrophes, that no expressions on the subject, however moderate, would be received with indifference.

Feeling with you the importance of our commercial connexions, I shall of course lend all my attention to establish and extend them. Permit me to entreat, my dear Sir, that you will send me all the information, which can be collected on the subject. If, at the same time, you could favor me with the particular points which it is desired to carry, I shall feel myself more at ease than in a general pursuit, which may perhaps be directed to objects less important than I may suppose them.

I thank you for the accurate statement you have been so kind as to make, respecting my salary, &c. and you may rely that I shall exactly conform to your wishes on that head. And I take this opportunity to say, that you will never receive from

* See this letter in *Jefferson's Writings*, Vol. iii. p. 150.—Mr Morris's appointment was confirmed by the Senate on the 12th of January, and that intelligence was communicated in the letter here referred to from Mr Jefferson, as Secretary of State.

me any observations respecting the amount. If it proves insufficient, I will supply the want from my own funds, as far as they will permit, and the balance must be made up by retrenchment.

As you have yourself run through the career, which I am now about to commence, you know much better than I do the importance of early information, and therefore I feel more confidence in acting under you, than I should in any other situation. If you would kindly afford me your good counsel, it would confer a great obligation. Pardon me, I pray you, one observation. The distance of America is such, that *probable* events are almost of equal importance with those which have actually happened, because measures must be squared in some degree to the one as much as to the other. You will from hence infer my desire to know on some subjects the best opinion which can be formed; and I am sure I cannot better address myself for that purpose than to you. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO WILLIAM CARMICHAEL.

Paris, May 14th, 1792.

Dear Carmichael,

I received your letter of the fifth of April in London, but I did not choose to reply from thence, because I did not wish my letter to be inspected. It is true that I am appointed Minister Plenipotentiary here. I did not and could not announce it, because it was in the *Gazettes* a long time before it was officially known to me, and as our Senate can prevent an appointment, I was long in doubt whether this had really taken effect. It was unexpected, and must for some time to come be unpleasant.

You know that I do, from the bottom of my heart, wish well to this country, and will therefore easily judge what I have felt in seeing them long since in the high road to despotism. They

have made the common mistake, that, to enjoy liberty, it is necessary only to demolish authority, and the common consequence results, viz. that the most ardent advocates for the revolution begin now to wish and pray, and even cry out for the establishment of despotic power, as the only means of securing the lives and properties of the people. This is terrible. The war in which they are engaged furnishes a dreary prospect; there seems to be but one ground to hope for success, which is, that improbable things are those which usually happen. I will not dwell on these topics.

From what you tell me I have concluded, that the British ministry sent forward to Madrid my communications, to defeat your views. This procedure was adroit enough, but what will you think of the measure, when I tell you that they assigned in America as a reason for not treating with me, my attachment to France. In effect I would not listen to any overture tending to violate our treaties and connexion with the House of Bourbon. If the Spanish Ambassador in London had made true report, my conduct in London would have served, and not injured you. I even went so far as to put my letters to you under cover to him; he knowing my sentiments, first from the French Ambassador, and afterwards from me, in a conversation of some length; but I am afraid that he thought of other things besides the interest of his sovereign.

My letters to the British ministry were calculated to draw from them a pointed answer, or put them in the wrong if they preserved an obstinate silence. I did not believe that we should make a treaty with them at that time, but I thought the occasion suitable for taking such ground as might be useful to us hereafter. If you can again see my letters, read them, I pray you, in that idea, and then you can explain them so as to remove any evil impressions. If you have received what I wrote you at the same period, expressly to be communicated to the Spanish court, you will have seen that this was the true idea. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, June 10th, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

Although I have been above a month in this city, I have not been able until within a day or two to make up my mind, as to the sentiments of the person mentioned to you in mine of the twenty-first of March, or rather I could not obtain that certainty which was needful, before I could properly mention them to you. I can now venture to assure you, that *by coming into office he has not changed his sentiments.*

My former letters have mentioned to you the indiscipline of the French armies, and the public prints will give you such facts on that head, as may tend to making up in your mind a solid judgment as to future events. The first step towards bankruptcy has already been made, by extending to seventeen hundred millions the sum of Assignats, which may be in circulation. A further extension must take place in a few days. The powers combined against France have it therefore in their choice, to wear her out by a war of resources, or dash into the heart of the country. This last will best suit with their own situation, but I do not think they will advance before the beginning of August.

Your letter to the King has produced a very good effect. It is not relished by the Democrats, who particularly dislike the term '*your people,*' but it suits well the prevailing temper, which is monarchical. The Jacobin faction approaches to its dissolution, as you may perceive by its agonies. In fact, the deliberations are so absurd and so extravagantly wild, that they daily furnish new arms to their enemies. You will perceive at a glance, that this is not a moment for making commercial treaties. I shall however do all that I can, without seriously compromising our *future interests.* I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, June 10th, 1792.

Dear Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge your favors of the tenth of March, and twenty-eighth of April.* My last was of the twenty-fifth of April. As Mr Short remained here until the second instant, and was better acquainted with the current transactions, I relied on him for the communication of them. He informed you, that we obtained an interview with M. Dumouriez on the fifteenth of May. In this interview he told me, that he thought it was best I should be presented to the King immediately, but yet my first audience did not take place until the third of this month. He apologised for this delay, as proceeding from the state of public affairs, which kept him continually occupied and agitated. I shall have occasion presently to say something about them.

In our first conversation, as a fair opportunity presented itself, I made use of it to tell him that, during my residence here in a private character, I had, as well from my attachment to the cause of liberty in general, as to the interests of France in particular, endeavored to effectuate some changes in the Constitution, which appeared to me essential to its existence. That, being now in a public character, I thought it my duty to avoid all interference in their affairs, of which, from henceforth, I should be a mere spectator. I will not trouble you with repeating what passed at my reception by the King and Queen.

On the next day I dined with M. Dumouriez, and delivered the letter from the President to the King, on his acceptance of the constitution, of which letter I had previously made a translation, to avoid mistakes of their agents, which are not uncommon. Several members of the *Corps Diplomatique* have spoken to me on the subject of this letter, which has given them a

* See *Jefferson's Writings*, Vol. iii. pp. 155, 168.

high idea of the President's wisdom. I took occasion, according to your instructions, to mention the obnoxious acts of the late Assembly, both to M. Dumouriez, and to M. Bonne-Carrère, his confidential secretary. The latter told me that he coincided with me in opinion fully on that subject, but that nothing could be done till they brought the Assembly into more consistency. That they could indeed command a majority, but that they could not bring that majority into a support of other measures than those of the moment. That, however, we might digest the business, and put it in train. M. Dumouriez told me that his system of politics was extremely simple. That a power so great as France stood in no need of alliances, and therefore he was against all treaties other than those of commerce. That he would very readily enter with me into a consideration of a treaty of commerce, but wished me to defer it until he should return from the frontiers.

In order that you may fully understand the facts, which I shall have occasion to communicate, I think it most advisable to mention the state of affairs in this country, such as it appears to me. I shall avoid speaking of characters, for evident reasons. You are already informed, I suppose, of the reasons which led to a declaration of war against the King of Hungary, and you know that the hope of an insurrection in the Austrian Flanders was among the reasons. Indeed, the intention to excite it, and the efforts made to that effect, have, (for the first time, I believe, in modern days) been publicly avowed. This hope has hitherto proved fallacious, and indeed as far as can be judged from the temper and character of the Flemish people, and from the information I have been able to collect, it seems to be the better opinion, that however they may feel an aversion to the Austrian government, they are still less disposed to that of France. There is, therefore, no probability of any capital diversion in that quarter, and the chance of it is daily decreasing, from two natural causes. First, the French troops are extremely undisciplined; and secondly, the force of their enemies will soon receive very considerable additions.

On the first of these heads I need say nothing, since you will receive from various quarters the sufficient evidences. In respect to the latter, having combined all the intelligence which can be relied on, it results that about the middle of next month the allied armies will be one hundred and eighty thousand strong, exclusive of the French emigrants.

It is doubtful whether these last will be permitted to act, and for the following reasons. First, it is not to be supposed that twenty thousand gentlemen volunteers serving at their own expense can be well disciplined ; consequently it is to be apprehended that they will be more injurious to their friends than to their enemies. Secondly, it is next to impossible that in such a number, all irritated by injuries either real or supposed, there should not be some who will act more from motives of private vengeance, than regard to public good, and it is certain that acts of cruelty and injustice will rather tend to prolong than terminate the contest, at least to give it that termination which they wish for. Thirdly, it is notorious that the great mass of the French nation is less solicitous to preserve the present order of things, than to prevent the return of the ancient oppressions, and of course would more readily submit to a pure despotism, than to that kind of monarchy whose only limits were found in those noble, legal, and clerical corps, by which the people were alternately oppressed and insulted.

And this observation leads naturally to the object of the combined powers, which I conceive to be the establishment of a military government on the ruins of that anarchic system which now prevails, and in the continuance of which no power but England has any interest. The others, seeing that without a counterpoise in the marine scale, Britain must possess the Empire of the Ocean, (which in the present commercial state of the world is a kind of universal empire,) cannot but wish to re-establish this kingdom.

But a great question occurs. What kind of government shall be established? The emigrants hope for their darling aristocracy ; but it can hardly be supposed, that Kings will exert themselves to raise abroad what they labor incessantly to

destroy at home, and more especially as the French revolution having been begun by the nobles, the example will be so much the more striking, if they become the victims of it. But if the allied monarchs have an interest in destroying the Aristocracy, they have a much stronger and a more evident interest in preventing a free and well poised system from being adopted. Such system must inevitably extend itself, and force the neighboring powers to relax from their tyranny. If the court of Berlin could have been insensible to this truth, in which it is so deeply interested, the zealous reformers here would have not permitted the Prussian ministers to slumber over their danger. The desire to propagate and make converts to their opinions has led them so far, that the quarrel which might have been only political has become personal, and I have good reason to believe, notwithstanding the profound secrecy which is preserved respecting the designs of the grand alliance, that it is in contemplation to put all power into the hands of the King.

Things have been prepared for that event by the inconsiderable partizans of liberty. In their eagerness to abolish ancient institutions they forgot that a *monarchy* without intermediate ranks is but another name for *anarchy* or *despotism*. The first, unhappily, exists to a degree scarcely to be paralleled, and such is the horror and apprehension, which licentious societies have universally inspired, that there is some reason to believe the great mass of French population would consider even despotism as a blessing, if accompanied with security to person and property, such as is experienced under the worst governments in Europe.

Another great means of establishing despotism here, is to be found in that national bankruptcy which seems to be inevitable. The expense of the last month exceeded the income by about ten millions of dollars. This expense continues to increase, and the revenue to diminish. The estate of the clergy is consumed, and the debt is as great as at the opening of the States-General. The current expense has, by taking

away the property of the church, been increased about a sixth. The dilapidation in every department is unexampled, and they have, to crown all, an increasing paper money, which already amounts to above three hundred millions of dollars.

From such facts it is impossible not to draw the most sinister presages. The country people have hitherto been actuated in a great measure by the hope of gain. The abolition of tithes, of feudal rights, and burthensome taxes, was so pleasant that a cold examination of consequences could not be admitted; still less an inquiry into the strict measure of justice.

Next to the abolition came on those philosophical and mathematical arrangements of the *Fisc*, which are very beautiful and satisfactory, and to which there lies but one objection of any consequence, which is, that they are inexecutable. Now I have frequently observed, that when men are brought to abandon the paths of justice, it is not easy to arrest their progress at any particular point, and therefore, as the whole kingdom (Paris excepted) is interested in the non-payment of taxes, the question will be decided without much difficulty, if once the legislature get out of this city.

They are already preparing for a march, and it is intended to take the King with them, to which effect a decree has already passed to disband his life guard, and another to collect 20,000 men to the northward of this city. An opposition will be made by the Parisian militia to the latter decree, because they begin to perceive the object; and as it seems to be a pretty general opinion among them, that no capital opposition will be made to the Austrian and Prussian troops, they consider the person of Louis the Sixteenth as forming the most solid reliance they have to protect them from plunder and outrage. This decree may therefore occasion either a schism between the militia and the Assembly, or among the inhabitants of Paris, or both.

Already there exists a serious breach between the members of the present administration, and a part of them must go out.

I have the best reason to believe, that the whole will be changed before many weeks, and some of them within a few days. There exists also a mortal enmity between different parties in the Assembly. At the head of the Jacobin faction is the Deputation of Bourdeaux, and that city is, as you know, particularly indisposed to our commercial interests. It is this state of universal hostility, or rather confusion, to which Dumouriez alluded when he apologised for delaying my audience. And it was this also that his confidant had in view, when he mentioned the necessity of waiting for a greater consistency in the legislature, before anything could be done.

I mentioned to you above, that M. Dumouriez had it in contemplation to visit the frontiers. This was in his quality of principal minister, and certainly not as minister of Foreign Affairs. One of his principal advisers tells me that he has dissuaded him from taking that step. The object was to bring the army to action; for having brought on a state of hostility, of which personally he is deeply concerned in the success, he has little hope unless from a *coup de main*, before the armies of the enemy are collected. In consequence, he has given repeated orders to fight, both to Monsieur Luckner and Monsieur Lafayette. The former has declined, and the latter peremptorily refused; the situation of their respective armies not permitting any well grounded expectations. At present the two armies are in march to form a junction, when the whole will be commanded by Monsieur Luckner. It is expected that he will be at the head of sixty thousand picked troops, and the Austrians cannot well oppose above thirty-five thousand. It is said that they are to act immediately, but I have pretty good reason to believe that the stroke will be about the twentieth to the twenty-fifth.

M. Dumouriez told me that he was perfectly easy in respect to Prussia, whose only object was to get the House of Austria fairly engaged, and then to take advantage of its embarrassments. I told him that he must of course be well informed on that subject, but that since the departure of the Prussian

minister, without taking leave, I could not but suppose the intentions of that court were more serious than he imagined. He gave me many reasons for his opinion, which I should have supposed to be only an ostensible one, if his intimates had not on another occasion quoted it to me, and if I did not know the principal channel through which he derives his intelligence. A late circumstance will tend rather to establish than remove this opinion; I mean the attack of Poland by the Empress of Russia to overturn the new constitution. Whether this movement be in concert with the Austrian and Prussian cabinets or not, is doubtful. I cannot as yet make up any tolerable judgment on the subject, but I believe that in either case those cabinets will pursue their objects in regard to this country.

The details I have entered into, and the informations which you will collect from the public prints, will show that in the present moment it will be very difficult to excite attention to other objects, than those by which they are so strongly agitated. The best picture I can give of the French nation is, that of cattle before a thunder storm. And as to the government, every member of it is engaged in the defence of himself, or the attack of his neighbor. I shall, notwithstanding, pursue the objects which you recommend. The obstacles to success form but incitements to the attempt. It must however be made with caution, because any sudden change of affairs may bring forward persons, who would oppose a measure merely because their predecessors had approved of it.

You desired me among other things to send you the *Moniteur*, but the editor of that paper does not give so faithful a report of what passes in the Assembly, as you will find in the *Logographe*. If there be any one of the Gazetteers who is impartial, it is the author, or rather transcriber, of this. I send you of course the Gazette of France, which says, you know, whatever the ministry orders it to say. The *Patriote Français*, written by M. Brissot, will give you the republican side of the question, as the *Gazette Universelle* does that of the kind of monarchy proposed by the constitution. The paper called the *Indicateur* is writ-

ten by a party, who wish a more vigorous executive, although (strange to tell) this party consists of the persons, who in the beginning of the late Assembly did everything to bring the kingdom into the situation now experienced. The journal of the Jacobins will give you what passes in that society. The Gazette of Leyden, which I transmit according to your request, will convey a kind of digest of all these different sentiments and opinions. Thus, Sir, if you have the patience to look over these several papers, you will have a clear view not only of what is done, but of what is intended.

For the present I take my leave, with the assurances of that sincere respect and esteem, with which I am yours,

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, June 17th, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

I had the honor to write to you on the tenth instant. The ministry is changed rather sooner than I expected, that is to say, as to the totality. Messieurs Servan, Roland, and Clavière were dismissed by M. Dumouriez. He filled the places of the two former with his particular friends, and as this step was decisive and would certainly bring on very serious quarrels, it was supposed that he had prepared himself beforehand for all consequences.

It would seem, however, that he was less firmly fixed than he had imagined, for as the reason for sending away the other ministers was, that they insisted on the royal sanction to the two obnoxious and unconstitutional decrees, it was in the natural order of things, that they should be immediately sent back to the Assembly. Instead of that it is said, that Monsieur Dumouriez insisted on passing both, and in case of refusal threatened resignation. To his surprise the King accepted the resignation, and in consequence, his friends newly appoint-

ed go out with him. As the present set have not all taken the oaths, I will defer giving you the list for the present, but put at the foot of my letter the names and places of such as may finally be fixed on.

The Jacobins were busy all last night to excite a tumult in the city, but the precautions taken to prevent it have as yet proved successful. I am told that M. Luckner and M. de Lafayette still persist in their determination not to risk an action. If so, the present state of uncertainty may continue some time. If they fight and gain a victory, it is not improbable that we may witness some outrages of the most flagitious kind. If on the contrary there is any capital defeat, the Jacobin fiction will be a little moderated. On the whole, Sir, we stand on a vast volcano, we feel it tremble and we hear it roar, but how, and when, and where it will burst, and who may be destroyed by its eruption, are beyond the ken of mortal foresight to discover.

While I am writing I learn the following to be the arrangement for the new ministry. Of the old set, two remain, M. Duranthon and M. Lacoste. The former is said to be a pretty honest man, but rather too much attached to the *Faction Bordeloise*. The latter is considered as an honest man, well acquainted with the business of his department, the Marine. M. Lajarre is appointed to the department of War. He is a creature of M. de Lafayette. His ability doubtful, but his principles sound. M. Chambonas is appointed to the office of Foreign Affairs. He is *un homme d'esprit*, but *une mauvaise tête, un mauvais sujet*, and ignorant of the business, at least so says my informant, and he is well informed. M. Mouciel, a very worthy man, is named to the department of the Interior, but his acceptance is very doubtful. The minister of Impositions is not yet fixed on. He will I believe be a cypher, for two or three such have been applied to.

This new ministry will be purged, at any rate, of some of its members, but one great doubt exists whether it will not be driven off by the Jacobin faction. It is in contemplation to

make a serious effort against that faction in favor of the constitution, and M. de Lafayette will begin the attack. I own to you that I am not sanguine as to the success. Very much is to be done, and there is very little time to do it in, for the foreign enemy will soon be greatly superior in number, and it seems now to be ascertained, that Alsace and Lorraine are disposed to join the invaders. Thus, while a great part of the nation is desirous of overturning the present government, in order to restore the ancient form, and while another part, still more dangerous from position and numbers, are desirous of introducing the form of a federal republic, the moderate men, attacked on all sides, have to contend alone against an immense force.

I cannot go on with the picture, for my heart bleeds when I reflect that the first opportunity, which ever presented itself for establishing the rights of mankind throughout the civilized world, is perhaps lost, and forever. I write on as events arise, and shall continue to do so until an opportunity to send my letters shall present itself. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, July 1st, 1792.

Dear Sir,

According to your orders I sit down to render this day a state of my account, which will be but short, because I shall charge at present no contingencies. There are some such which will come in my next account, and which would be stated this day, but as I have not yet got into the house which I hired immediately after my arrival, and which I have daily been in the hope of entering, my papers and books remain in the state in which they were. Add to this, that the amount is not great, and that I am very much occupied and very frequently interrupted.

I left London on the last day of April; wherefore my salary to the last day of June being for two months was fifteen hundred dollars. My outfit is nine thousand, making, together, ten thousand five hundred dollars, for which I have drawn on the bankers of the United States at Amsterdam.

I have boxed up the several newspapers to this day, and shall send them to Havre. My secretary's salary will now commence. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO M. CHAMBONAS, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

Translation.

Paris, July 9th, 1792.

Sir,

I have already had the honor of informing you of the good dispositions of the United States toward France, of which they are sincerely desirous of giving multiplied proofs. I have had the honor also of informing you, that during the last session of Congress, although heavy duties were laid upon wines imported from other countries, no addition has been made to the duties paid by those of your country; which amounts, in fact, to allowing them a premium from which they must derive a considerable sale. It is thus, Sir, that the American government, while employed in paying its pecuniary debt, endeavors at the same time to discharge that of gratitude. You may rely on its faithful exactness, and give the King this assurance.

I should, however, but ill fulfil my duty to my country, and should give but a weak expression of the attachment, which I have so long entertained for your own, if I should attempt to conceal the discontent that has been excited in America by the decrees of the Constituent Assembly, which are inflicting a blow upon the system of commerce established between France and the United States before the year 1789. I refrain from all observations on this subject, because I refer the

whole matter to your wisdom, and to the sentiments of your nation, and I venture to believe, that even if their own interests alone were concerned, the National Assembly would not allow regulations to continue in force, which are still more oppressive to the French consumers, than they are injurious to the American ship-owners.

There is another subject, Sir, to which you will certainly lend all the attention that its importance deserves. The Constituent Assembly expressed a wish, that the King should cause a new treaty of commerce to be negotiated with America. This was communicated to the President of the United States by the Minister Plenipotentiary of his Majesty, but, hitherto, nothing has been the result of this project. I am instructed to assure you, that the United States will very cordially receive any overtures, that shall be made to them on this subject, and that they are desirous to establish this treaty on foundations that shall be just, firm, and reciprocally beneficial to the two nations. The Minister Plenipotentiary of France at Philadelphia is in a better condition, than any one else, to appreciate the advantages of such a treaty, and I venture to assure you now, that if he is intrusted by the King with this negotiation, he will experience on our part the most open and amicable dispositions. You will do me a great pleasure, Sir, when you shall be pleased to authorize me to write, that such a commission has been given him. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, July 10th, 1792.

Dear Sir,

I had the honor to write to you on the first instant. On the seventeenth of the last month I mentioned the plans then in contemplation, and gave a short view of the existent state of things. I did not communicate those events, which have since

taken place, because you will find the most ample details in the several Gazettes.

On Saturday, the seventh, a farce was acted in the Assembly, in which the principal performers played well their parts, and the King was duped according to custom. Things are now verging fast to the catastrophe of the play. For some weeks, the adverse parties, I mean the court and Jacobins, have been laboring, each to cast on the other the odium of violating entirely the constitution, and commencing the civil war. The party which calls itself independent, and which in fact is the fearful party, begs hard for peace, and seizes eagerly whatever bears the appearance or the name. It was to catch these gudgeons that the scene of Saturday was exhibited.

The King and Queen, believing that the actors were in earnest, and knowing that their lives had been at stake, were overjoyed; and their timid counsellors, trembling under the tyrannous powers of the Assembly, seized with eagerness the bait of reconciliation, which had been thrown out without any hope that they would swallow it. One of them, whom I have already mentioned to you as a very worthy man, saw through the thin veil of deception, and opposed the opinion of the others, but in vain. Events in justifying him have fixed his predominance. This day the King will commence a new career, and if he goes *through*, I think he will succeed. I have every reason to believe that this letter will go safely, but yet I cannot justify saying more on the subject, because otherwise the confidence reposed in me might in the course of events prove fatal to my informant.

The present intention of the King is to secure the liberty of France; but whether he will preserve the steady purpose through those varying events, which must soon take place, to me appears uncertain. Indeed, I doubt whether he will be sufficiently master of his own party to execute such purpose, even if it be not changed. Whether he will live through the storm is also uncertain. It will blow hard.

The exterior enemy hovers over his prey, and only seems

to wait the moment which he has fixed to himself for his own stroke. New parties to the grand alliance daily show themselves. The Palatinate has declared; Holland seems on the point of adhering; and doubts in regard to England begin to appear. The force, which France can oppose to her numerous assailants, does not exceed one hundred and eighty thousand undisciplined men; some of whom wait but the opportunity to desert. Against her, are collected two hundred and fifty thousand of the best troops in Europe, under the command of the ablest General in this hemisphere. The intention was not to enter before the harvest, in order that subsistence might be easily procured. Whether this plan will be changed in consequence of what is like to happen here, I cannot say. I rather think it will. I understand that the manifesto, which precedes attack, will disavow the constitution, and claim for the King (what it calls) his *rights*; for the clergy, their *possessions*. That this city will be rendered responsible for the royal family. That the *Gardes Nationales* will be considered as armed peasants, meddling with business not their own, and therefore not under the protection of the laws of war. The allied monarchs are to declare themselves in arms, not against France, but against the *revoltés*. You will easily see that these broad terms will mean whatever power may choose to explain them to mean.

I have repeatedly pressed the minister of Foreign Affairs to come to a settlement of accounts, which he has promised to do, and I think I shall accomplish my purpose, because the Marine department is to treat with me for supplies to St Domingo. I mean to be generous in the terms of exchange for this supply, obtaining at the same time a beneficial liquidation of past payments; for you will observe, Sir, that the whole account is open. Two reasons operate with me on this occasion. First, I think that we ought to encourage our own agriculture and arts; and secondly, I think what is paid here goes into a gulph of unbottomed profusion, and can but little advance the real interests of the nation.

I have also repeatedly called the minister's attention to the obnoxious acts of the late Assembly, and to their proposition of a new commercial treaty. He has replied very candidly, that for himself he should be glad to settle everything to my satisfaction, but that his ministerial existence is too precarious to undertake any extensive plan; that the attention of government is turned too strongly towards itself, in the present moment, to think of its exterior interests; and that the Assembly, at open war with the executive, would certainly reject whatever should now be presented to them. These are truths which I knew before, and therefore I thought it best not to urge too strongly for a decision, in the unpropitious moment. The apparent reconciliation of Saturday seemed to give a better prospect. The court on Sunday had an air less embarrassed, and therefore, although the dictate of my judgment was different from that of others, I thought it my duty to make a formal application, which I did yesterday in a letter, a copy of which shall be transmitted. My intelligence of this morning justifies the opinion I had formed, and proves that the matter must be yet for some time suspended. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, August 1st, 1792.

Dear Sir,

My last was of the tenth of July. Mr Livingston, who is on his way to America, presents an opportunity of writing, which must not be neglected, although I am engaged at present in examination of the account received from the Commissioners of the Treasury. I have already mentioned to you, Sir, that the whole of this account is open, and I must now observe, that I do not find myself particularly authorised to make the final adjustment. If it becomes necessary, I will do it, but I shall avoid it as long as I can. In respect to the payments made and making in America, I am at ease, because there I have

your orders ; but not so in regard to those made by Mr Short. I shall hope however to be favored with your instructions in consequence of his communications. I shall write particularly respecting the account, when I have gone through it.

In a former letter I mentioned that M. de Lafayette was about to commence an attack upon the Jacobin faction. I have not followed that business in my correspondence, because the *Gazettes* will furnish the most ample intelligence. I mentioned my apprehension, that it would not be successful, and it furnishes a new instance of the instability of human affairs, especially of those which depend on the opinion of an ignorant populace. I verily believe that if M. de Lafayette were to appear just now in Paris unattended by his army, he would be torn to pieces. Thank God, we have no populace in America, and I hope the education and manners will long prevent that evil. In the present state of things, it seems evident that if the King be not destroyed, he must soon become absolute. I think the prime movers of the revolution see no other mode of establishing the affairs of their country, on any tolerable footing, and will therefore declare their adherence to his Majesty, grounded on the abolition of the constitution by the Assembly, and their masters, the Jacobin club.

In my last I told you, that the King would that day commence a new career ; but while I was writing all was changed, and my letter was gone off but a few minutes, before I was informed that the ministry had given in their resignation. I will not communicate the reasons, because they would be uninteresting to you, and should my letter miscarry, it would occasion much of that noise and nonsense, in which it is unpleasant to find one's name. And the wrong-headed people, who get hold of such things, cannot distinguish between a person who has obtained exact information of what is doing, and those who are actors in the business. For the same reason, I must decline mentioning the plans in agitation, at present, to establish a good constitution. I dare not say that I *hope* this will take place. I ardently *wish* it, but I have doubts and fears, because I have no confidence in the morals of the people. The King is anxious to

secure their permanent happiness ; but alas ! they are not in a state of mind to receive good from his hands. Suspicion, that constant companion of vice and weakness, has loosened every band of social union, and blasts every honest hope in the moment of its budding.

You will have seen in the report of the minister of Foreign Affairs to the Assembly, that the impressions are made, which you desire, respecting the dispositions of the United States. After this report was made, some persons spoke to me of those dispositions in a tone of irony ; but I assured them, very seriously, that our grateful sentiments for the conduct of this nation would be demonstrated by our conduct, whenever occasion should require. That the changes they might make in their own administration, would by no means affect our regard for them, nor diminish our attachment. As this language was not ministerial, but held in the sincerity of social life, it surprised those who, unfortunately for them, can find for the conduct of nations no motive but interest, and are so short-sighted as not to perceive, that a virtuous and honorable conduct is the truest interest which a nation can pursue.

In respect to other objects which are committed to me, it is hardly necessary to say, that nothing can be done in the present moment. Such time as the Assembly can spare from the discussion of party disputes is necessarily engrossed by the department of war and finance. The determination to suspend the King has been a little pallied by the information, that their armies would immediately revolt, and particularly the Southern army, on which they made their greatest reliance. This circumstance has greatly deranged the plan of operations, and the more so, as many instruments especially convened and collected for that grand stroke are at present no small incumbrance to the contrivers of it. Among these are the Bretons and Marseillois now in this city. Some of the chiefs of the Jacobins have, I am told, prepared the means of their escape to America, and among them your old acquaintance Condorcet. They are to embark at Dunkirk and St Valery. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

M. LEBRUN TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.*

Translation.

Paris, August 4th, 1792.

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you, that the King has made choice of M. Bonne-Carrère, director general of the *Département Politique*, to succeed M. Ternant as minister plenipotentiary from France to the United States. M. Bonne-Carrère regrets that it has not been in his power to announce to you himself his nomination to a post, which will continue and he hopes will augment his relations with you. But he is prevented by a very severe rheumatic attack, which not only confines him to his bed, but disables him from every kind of effort. He will seize the first moment after his recovery to call and see you, but he is not willing to delay any longer to reiterate to you the assurances of his zeal, and the sentiments with which you have inspired him.

I undertake with great pleasure on this occasion the office of his interpreter, and I have the honor to be, &c.

LEBRUN.

 TO THOMAS PINCKNEY.†

Paris, August 13th, 1792.

Dear Sir,

I had the pleasure to acknowledge yours of the first of August by a courier, who left this city a few hours after I received it. I hope this will find you well and happy in London. The young gentleman whom I mentioned to you as being about

* M. Lebrun was at this time first Clerk, or *Commis*, in the office of Foreign Affairs.

† Minister from the United States in London.

to come hither is arrived, so that we must wait for another conveyance for the packet. In the mean time be so kind as to let me know your address in London. Mine is Rue de la Planche, No. 488.

We have had here within these few days some serious scenes, at which I am not surprised, because I foresaw not only a struggle between the two corps, which the constitution had organized, viz. the executive (so called) and the legislative. But I was convinced that the latter would get the better. Such is the natural, and indeed the necessary order of things. It is nevertheless a painful reflection, that one of the finest countries in the world should be so cruelly torn to pieces. The storm which lately raged is a little subsided, but the winds must soon arise again, and perhaps from the same, perhaps from another quarter. But that is of but little consequence, since in every case we must expect a little rage and devastation. A man, attached to his fellow men, must see with the same distress the woes they suffer, whether arising from an army or from a mob, and whether those by whom they are inflicted speak French or German.

An American has a stronger sympathy with this country than any other observer, and nourished as he is in the very bosom of liberty, he cannot but be deeply afflicted to see that in almost every event, this struggle must terminate in despotism. Yet such is the melancholy spectacle, which presents itself to my mind, and with which it has long been occupied. I earnestly wish and pray, that events may prove all my reasonings to have been fallacious, and all my apprehensions vain. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, August 16th, 1792.

Dear Sir,

My last was of the first instant. Since that period another revolution has been effected in this city. It was bloody. Success, which always makes friends, gives to the present order an air of greater unanimity than really exists. A very considerable party is deeply interested to overturn it, but what may be their conduct is uncertain. Whether they will confine themselves to idle vows and empty wishes, or whether they will break out into action, is doubtful. Some of them are men of enterprise, but it is rather small than great enterprise.

As you know well this kingdom, it may perhaps be sufficient to mention the kind of persons who compose this party. They are those who called themselves the *moderate*, or *middle men*, and who hoped to balance the two extremes, and govern the kingdom by playing off one set against the other. This, in quiet times, requires great talents, as well as great address, and they had more of the latter than the former. In times of turbulence it is necessary, that those who play this game should have a considerable armed force, because neither argument, nor persuasion, can then avail. It remains to be proved by the fact, whether they possess such force. If they do, it must be in the hands of M. de Lafayette; and as all must depend on an immediate exercise of it, I rather think that the precious moment will be suffered to pass away. I have long been convinced that this middle party, who by the bye were the prime movers of the revolution, must fall to the ground, and that those who compose it must join one of the great factions.

The Aristocratic faction is split into two or more. Some are for absolute monarchy, some for the ancient regime, some, and those but few, desire a mixed government. The framers of the late constitution had got up to this last ground, but the

idea of a hereditary Senate stuck in their throats. The King, who has an uncommon firmness in suffering, but who has not the talents for action, and who is besides a very religious man, found himself fettered by his oaths to the constitution, which he in his conscience believed to be a bad one; and about which indeed there is now but one opinion in this country, because experience, that great parent of wisdom, has brought it already to trial and condemnation. The King, from the causes just mentioned, would not step forward, and of course there was no standard to which the adherents of the two chambers could repair.

The republicans had the good sense to march boldly and openly to their object, and as they took care not to mince matters, nor embarrass themselves by legal or constitutional niceties, they had the advantage of union, concert, and design, against the disjointed members of a body without a head. If, under these circumstances, the foreign force were out of question, I should have no doubt that the republican form would take place quietly enough, and continue as long as the morals of the country would permit. You know the state of morals here, and can of course, if it be necessary, form the calculation for yourself. The circumstance of foreign force is however, on the present occasion, a preponderant object, and I think its effect will depend upon its activity. Should the Duke of Brunswick advance rapidly, he will be joined by great numbers, even of the armies opposed to him; because the late change will furnish to some a reason, and to others a pretext, for abandoning the cause they had espoused. If, on the contrary, his progress be cautious and slow, it is probable that those who are now silent from fear, will habituate themselves by degrees to speak favorably of the present government, in order to lull suspicion; and that thus a public opinion will appear, which, when once pronounced, governs the generality of mankind. If by this means the new republic takes a little root, foreign powers will, I believe, find it a difficult matter to shake it to the ground, for the French nation is an immense mass, which it is not easy either to move or to oppose.

You will observe, Sir, that matters are now brought to a simple question, between an absolute monarchy and a republic ; for all middle terms are done away. This question also must be decided by force, because on one side it is in the hands of the people, who cannot treat for themselves, and who will not permit others to treat for them in respect to the important interests which are now at stake. If, as in former times, some factious nobles were at the head of a party, they would, as formerly, take the first opportunity to stipulate for themselves at the expense of their party ; but without entering here into a question of relative integrity, I do not think the people are so attached to any particular men, as to have what may be called leaders ; and those who appear as such are in my opinion rather *instruments* than agents.

I do not go into the history of things, nor trouble you with a recapitulation of events. I enclose, and shall send by the present opportunity, the gazettes since my last, which will communicate all particulars, which you may desire to know. Since the operations of the tenth, the *Logographe*, *Gazette Universelle*, and *Indicateur*, are suppressed, as indeed were all those which were guilty of *Feuillantisme*, that is, adherence to the *Club des Feuillants soi-disant Constitutionel*. You must therefore make allowances for what you find in the other Gazettes, written not only in the spirit of a party, but under the eye of a party. The first must influence the most honest printer in the coloring of some facts, and the second will restrain the boldest printer in the publishing of other facts. If it were necessary, or could be useful, I should communicate all the particulars which come to my knowledge ; but this invidious task would answer no good end, and long before my letters could reach you, changes must inevitably take place.

One particular however it is becoming to note. You will find that the Assembly immediately superseded the appointment of a Monsieur Bonne-Carrère, as minister to the United States. This man's character is as bad as need be, and stained by infamous vices. By what influence he was introduced in-

to the office of Foreign Affairs I know not, for I was then in England ; but I have reason to believe it was the poor expedient of the *Feuillants* to watch, and check, and perhaps to betray the Jacobin ministry. While the King was pressing M. Sainte-Croix (an eight day minister) to accept the department of Foreign Affairs, this last declared that he would not serve if Bonne-Carrère was retained ; and to get rid of him they invented the expedient of sending him to America. I considered this step as a kind of insult, and transmitted my sentiments on the subject to the King, who thereupon told M. Sainte-Croix that I was angry at that appointment, and he must arrange the matter with me ; that he wished I would prevent his being received.

The minister apologised for himself by saying the nomination had taken place before he came into office, and that he had remonstrated against it. He apologised for the thing as well as he could, admitting always that it was wrong ; and added that his embarkation should be delayed, and I was at liberty to prevent his being received. To this I replied, that he must not embark at all, but be removed ; and that would have been done, for when he presented the *Bon* for his appointments, the minister refused to sign it. In the mean time the new revolution took place, and the history of M. Bonne-Carrère's ministry is at an end. It may perhaps be misrepresented, and therefore having stated the facts, I think it right to add that it proceeded from downright weakness. He was supposed to possess the confidence of a great many of the nobility, and therefore they were afraid to turn him about his business. Perhaps also he had been trusted so far that he knew too much. This was the case with some others, not better than him as to essentials, though not so much abased.

I shall send herewith a packet, containing my correspondence with the Commissioners of the Treasury, relative to our debt, and in the same packet you will find a letter from Mr Cathalan to you relative to a riot at Marseilles, and his conduct therein. He has written two long letters to me on that subject,

and I have replied by one of the thirteenth instant, which you will also find enclosed with his letter to you.

I have already had occasion to mention to you, Sir, that I did not find myself authorised to go into the settlement of the account *finally* with the Commissioners of the Treasury. This observation I must again in this place repeat, and add that notwithstanding my utmost efforts, I have not been able to bring the minister of Foreign Affairs to consider for a moment the question referred to me, respecting the sums paid and paying in America. What is still more surprising is, that the minister of the Marine, although authorised to treat with me for supplies to the colony of St Domingo, has done nothing in that affair. Two ministers have occupied that place since the decree. Each has given me various rendezvous, but neither has appeared at the time and place, because circumstances of the moment have obliged them to attend to something else. Indeed the executive of the late constitution has been at the last agony for these three months, and of course has thought more of saving its life than of doing its business. The present executive is just born, and may perhaps be stifled in the cradle.

If a general arrangement could have been made with the late government, for paying the whole of the debt at some fixed exchange, so as to do justice, and fulfil the honorable intentions of the United States, I should have been well pleased, and although not exactly authorised should probably have taken on me to make the needful engagements; and in so doing I should have made a great sacrifice to the public, because I wish of all things to be free from any pecuniary transactions, for I know by experience, that the utmost possible purity will not prevent malicious insinuations, which however unfounded will always find some believers.

It appears, however, a probable event, that before our debt is paid, we may experience some considerable losses on exchange, not to mention the dead charges which are considerable too. It has therefore appeared to me most advisable to make one general statement and settlement of the whole; and if it shall appear that we have gained, and that they have lost

by the modes of payment, then to give a good round sum as a compensation, and as it were gratuitously, because by that means we have the reputation of the good we do, and the sacrifice we make ; and because otherwise the agents of this government might attribute to their address an advantage gained, instead of giving credit to our generosity for a compensation granted. And it seems important to establish the latter idea, because it cannot fail to extend our credit throughout the world, and consequently to facilitate all pecuniary operations, which hereafter we may have occasion to make.

Before I conclude this letter, permit me, my dear Sir, to request the orders of the President respecting my line of conduct in the circumstances about to arise. Perhaps these orders may not reach me, until the circumstances are past, but even then they may serve as a ground to reason on, in the circumstances which succeed. If they arrive in season, they will relieve my mind from a great weight. At present I feel myself in a state of contingent responsibility of the most delicate kind. I am far from wishing to avoid any fair and reasonable risk, and I rely on the justice of government, at the same time, to mark out as exactly as possible the conduct to be pursued, as well as on its goodness to judge favorably of causes unforeseen. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

Paris, August 17th, 1792.

Dear Sir,

Mr Short, just before he departed from this city, left with me a *Memoir* in Dutch, respecting the mint. I was to get it translated for you, but not having been able to find a person acquainted with the Dutch and English languages, I have now determined to send you the original, which you will find here enclosed. I hope it may prove useful, and answer the end you had in view. I have transmitted to Mr Jefferson copies

of my correspondence with the Commisioners of the Treasury here, respecting our debt. You seem to have supposed, that the instalments due had been paid, and this may turn out to be the case, when the account shall have been strictly examined, which I shall take care of. Mr Short left (as I presume he informed you,) this business unfinished, supposing that my powers would be competent to it, which they are not; and indeed I should be glad to avoid all interference in pecuniary affairs, if possible. Not on account of the labor, for you may lay as much of that on me as you please, but I would avoid all occasions of slanderous imputation.

I formerly recommended to Mr Short the opening of a loan at Antwerp, and it was attended with the best effects; for the capitalists of Amsterdam, who had shortly before induced our Commissioners to believe that money could not be obtained there under five per cent, soon after let us have it at four. This I was sure would happen, for I had been in Holland, had studied the character of the money lending people, and made myself acquainted with the manner of transacting business.

I am still of opinion, that it is wise to multiply the scenes on which to display our credit. Those, who have lent money to a nation, naturally incline to speak well of that nation, first to justify the confidence they have placed, and next to increase the value of the stock they possess. It may at first seem more eligible, because more convenient, to perform all our pecuniary operations at one place, and those, who are interested in establishing that doctrine, will find many plausible arguments in support of their favorite theory, just as somebody (I believe it was Silas Deane) endeavored to prove, that we had better buy teas and nankins in London than in China. I remember the thing made an impression on me at the time, as the India Company were then buying at Dunkirk some teas, which had been shipped from America.

To return from the digression, I apprehend that confining this business to one spot, may in the end have a very unfavorable influence both on our commerce and exchange, because

the necessity of remittances being known, and the periods also, capitalists can take their measures beforehand to give you the law. And if, which God forbid, public events should compel us to make loans, our creditors knowing our absolute dependence *on them alone*, will impose whatever terms they please. I do not dwell on these topics, because a word is sufficient to you.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, August 17th, 1792.

Dear Sir,

If I have not hitherto mentioned the application made to me by the foreign officers, who have certificates, whereof the interest is payable in this city, it has not been for want of sufficient reason, but because I daily hoped to have received some orders on that subject.* Many have spoken to me, written to me, and called upon me. I have given to all the general assurances, that justice would be done, that I would transmit their claims, and the like. I now enclose a letter from the Polish Envoy, relative to the claims of Brigadier General Kosciuszko, and I have told the Count d'Oraczewski that I daily expect despatches from you on this subject. I did this because General Duportail told me, that he had information from Colonel Ternant, that these claims are honorably provided for. In the uncertainty as to what may have been done, I feel it my duty to bring the matter to your recollection, persuaded that you will do everything which may be proper on the occasion.

* The French and other foreign officers, who served in America during the revolution, received certificates at the end of the war of money due to them. For their convenience provision was made for paying the interest at stated periods in Paris.

I enclose, in like manner, a letter I have received from Mr Francis Coffin of Dunkirk, respecting the Consular office in that city. I tell him in answer to it, that I shall inquire of M. de Lamotte as to the appointment he complains of, and will transmit his letter to you, and take your orders. These you will, I trust, be so kind as to give me. I know not Mr Coffin, and consequently can say nothing either for or against him. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, August 22d, 1792.

Dear Sir,

My last was of the seventeenth instant. In mine of the sixteenth, I mentioned the revolution of the tenth. I suggested my idea, that the force commanded by M. de Lafayette would not be brought to immediate action, and that in such case he and his friends had nothing to hope for. He, as you will learn, encamped at Sedan, and official accounts of last night inform us, that he has taken refuge with the enemy. Thus his circle is completed. He has spent his fortune on a revolution, and is now crushed by the wheel which he put in motion. He lasted longer than I expected. Some other officers tried to influence their troops in favor of the late constitution, but without effect. They are, it seems, yet to learn that an officer has never complete possession of his soldiers, till rigid discipline has led them by the hand over fields of glory, in which he has shared their danger, and pointed to them the path which leads to triumph.

These scenes are yet remote, but if the combined powers cannot succeed in the present plans, they must hereafter take place. In the mean time much suspicion, much jealousy, and many victims, are all in the natural order of things.

I do not find that the Prince of Brunswick has made those

rapid movements, which the existent state of things required, and he loses much by delay. He probably understands too well the business of war, and his high station requires a man in whom the accomplished General should be but a secondary talent. I cannot for a moment suppose a possibility of beating him with the French army, if army it can be called where there is no discipline; but if he will not commit himself a little to fortune, it appears to me a very easy matter to wear away the time till winter shuts the theatre. We are now far advanced in August, and he has at most three months before him.

The day before yesterday, the British Ambassador received a despatch from his court, which he immediately transmitted to the present minister of Foreign Affairs, and at the same time asked for passports. This despatch has not yet been communicated to the Assembly, because it runs rather counter to expectations which had been raised, and of course the public mind is not duly prepared. The purport of this despatch is, that Britain is determined on a strict neutrality, that she means to preserve it, and therefore, as his letters of credence are to the King now dethroned, he had best come away. To this is subjoined a hope, that nothing will happen to the King or his family, *because that would excite the indignation of all Europe*. This despatch, turned into plain English, is shortly, that the British court resent what is already done, and will make war immediately if the treatment of the King be such as to call for, or to justify, measures of extremity.

The different Ambassadors and ministers are all taking their flight, and if I stay I shall be alone. I mean however to stay, unless circumstances should command me away, because in the admitted case that my letters of credence are to the Monarchy, and not to the Republic of France, it becomes a matter of indifference whether I remain in this country, or go to England, during the time which may be needful to obtain your orders, or to produce a settlement of affairs here. Going hence, however, would look like taking part against the late revolution,

and I am not only unauthorised in this respect, but I am bound to suppose that if the great majority of the nation adhere to the new form, the United States will approve thereof; because in the first place we have no right to prescribe to this country the government they shall adopt, and next because the basis of our own constitution is the indefeasible right of the people to establish it.

Among those who are leaving Paris, is the Venetian Ambassador. He was furnished with passports from the office of Foreign Affairs, but he was nevertheless stopped at the barrier, was conducted to the Hotel de Ville, was there questioned for hours, and his carriages examined and searched. This violation of the rights of Ambassadors could not fail, as you may suppose, to make an impression. It has been broadly hinted to me, that the honor of my country and my own require that I should go away. But I am of a different opinion, and rather think that those who give such hints are somewhat influenced by fear. It is true that the position is not without danger; but I presume, that when the President did me the honor of naming me to this embassy, it was not for my personal pleasure or safety, but to promote the interests of my country. These, therefore, I shall continue to pursue to the best of my judgment, and as to consequences, they are in the hand of God. I have the honor to be, with great respect, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

M. LEBRUN, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.*

Translation.

Paris, August 30th, 1792.

Sir,

I call your attention again to day to the important subject,

* After the suspension of the monarchy, on the memorable 10th of Au-

discussed in our yesterday's conversation, only that I may convince you of the necessity of preventing the greater inconveniences, which would result from the pretended insufficiency of your powers.† Upon the principle, that your instructions do not authorise you to treat with the new French government, your functions would be, at this moment, void; and our colonies, whose urgent need of supplies demands our care, activity, and zeal, would be in danger of remaining in want of them.

I have the honor to observe, Sir, that we think too highly of the sentiments of friendship and affection, which the United States entertain towards France, to believe that their representative could, or ought to hesitate, under any pretext whatever, to promote the success of an arrangement, begun by Mr Short, and the continuation of which has been confided to your care.

The suspension of the King's functions should make no alteration, Sir, in the dispositions of a nation, with whom we are connected by friendship and interest, and whose independence is our work, (*et dont l'indépendance est notre ouvrage.*) She knows all the efforts and sacrifices we have made to obtain

gust, an *Executive Council* was established, which consisted of six ministers, as follows;—Danton, minister of Justice; Monge, of the Marine; Roland, of the Interior; Clavière, of Contributions; Servan, of War; Lebrun, of Foreign Affairs.

† On the 28th of August, Mr Morris received the following note from M. Lebrun.

‘Sir,

‘If you will have the goodness to call tomorrow at twelve o’clock at the Hotel of Foreign Affairs, you will meet there M. Clavière, minister of Public Contributions, M. Monge, minister of Marine, and myself, with whom you may enter into a conference relative to the supplies of our colonies. You will find us disposed to treat this affair in a manner the most satisfactory. I have the honor to be, &c.

‘Lebrun.’

The interview accordingly took place on the 29th, when the discussion alluded to in M. Lebrun's letter of the 30th occurred.

it for her. We do not say this to awaken your gratitude, but to excite your good will. I think, Sir, this was due from you to the French nation, before the actual accomplishment of this object, and that if you manifest it at this time, you will certainly meet the wishes of your constituents.

To return, Sir, I ought to tell you, that the King is only suspended from his office; moreover the government, being immutable, and, of necessity, always subsisting, no representative can, without an express order from his court, or his constituents, refuse to treat directly with it. Since the establishment of the new government, you have received from your constituents no order which could forbid this measure; you can then, Sir, fulfil the engagement entered into by Mr Short, relative to the eight hundred thousand dollars to be held at our disposal in North America, for the purchases necessary to supply our colonies. If the facts, which I have here placed before you, do not induce you to change the determination, which you made known to us yesterday, I beg you will have the goodness to assign the motives of your refusal, in the reply which I shall expect from you, and by which I shall be guided. I have the honor to be, &c.

LEBRUN.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, August 30th, 1792.

Dear Sir,

Heretofore I have mentioned to you, that I had not been able to adjust with the minister of Foreign Affairs the rate of exchange, which should govern the payments made, and making, in America, on account of our debt to France; and that I had not been able to see the minister of Marine, to adjust with him the sums which the Assembly had determined to apply out of that debt to the use of St Domingo. You will have seen, by my correspondence with the Commissioners of the Treasury, that the last payment of six millions will nearly

balance the account according even to their statement of it, over and above the four hundred thousand dollars, which are to be paid at Philadelphia during the current year.

A few days since M. Monge, the present minister of the Marine, desired an interview, and at our meeting he presented me a regular contract for payment of eight hundred thousand dollars, as being equivalent to the four million of livres, which the Assembly had appropriated as above mentioned. I will not trouble you with the conversation, because it ended in a request on his part to meet M. Lebrun the minister of Foreign Affairs, and M. Clavière the minister of Public Contributions. This meeting took place yesterday by their appointment. The same form of agreement was again produced, and M. Clavière, who was principal spokesman, mentioned my signing it as a thing of course. I told him that I had been authorised to settle with the late government the exchange of one half of that sum already paid, and paying, on this very account. He spoke of such settlement as the easiest thing in the world, and advanced on the subject exactly those principles, which Mr Short had refused to be governed by; and rejected as visionary those, which Mr Short had stated as just, and which I think are reasonable and right.

The great object however was to get the money, and Congress was to fix the exchange. I told them, (which is very true) that I felt a sincere desire to furnish aid to that unhappy colony, and had done everything in my power to comply with the wish of the legislature in that respect, but in vain; that at last our bankers in Holland being extremely anxious to discharge themselves of the large sums which had for months been lying in their hands, their own Commissaries of the Treasury being also desirous to receive it, Mr Short, to whom the management of that business had been committed by the United States, being also solicitous that the payments should be made, I had desired him to place in the hands of the bankers named by the Commissaries an equivalent of six millions of livres, by which means the instalments of our debt,

already due, were overpaid. That of course any advances now made must be on account of those instalments, which are to become due hereafter. That I had no instructions respecting them, for reasons I had already assigned, and that of consequence, if I should enter into the agreement they wished, I should probably be blamed for exceeding the line prescribed to me. That there remained, however, another point worthy of their attention, which was that my agreement would be in itself void, because I had no powers to treat with the present government. It followed, therefore, that the ministers of the United States would feel themselves as much at liberty, as if nothing had been done, and act according to their own ideas of the object, distinctly from any engagements. That it would be equally useful to them, and more proper in me, to state the whole matter to you in the first instance, and that I would add my earnest request to make the desired payment.

This however did not at all suit their ideas. M. Clavière made many observations on the nature of our debt, and the manner in which it had accrued. He said that the United States would certainly act in a different manner towards the present Government, from what the Monarchs of Europe did. That it was impossible I should have any difficulty, if I inclined to do what they asked, and then concluded by asking me peremptorily whether I would, or would not.

His language and manner were such as naturally to excite some little indignation, and although I would pardon much in a man, whose stockjobbing life had but little qualified him for a station in which delicacy of manner and expression is almost essential, yet I could not submit to an indignity in my person, towards the country I represent. I told him therefore that I did not understand what he meant to say. My countenance I believe spoke the rest of my sentiments, and led him to say, in explanation, that it was necessary for them to have some positive engagement, because otherwise they must make provision for the service from another source, and then he again

expressed his conviction, that the United States would recognise them; and at any rate would not disavow the engagements which I might make. I told him it was not proper for me, a servant, to pretend to decide on what would be the opinion of my masters. That I should wait their orders, and obey them when received. That the present Government might collect my sentiments from my conduct. That I could not possibly take on me to judge questions of such magnitude. That I would do everything I could with propriety, and again repeated my offer, which they would not listen to, and I left them, not a little displeased, if I may judge from appearances by no means equivocal.

The Dutch Ambassador, who dined with me, told me that he had received his orders, and should ask for passports this day. The British Ambassador went off two days ago, and Mr Lindsay, their Minister, intends going tomorrow. He offers to take my letters to Mr Pinckney, to whom I shall enclose this to be forwarded to you.

Last evening between ten and eleven, I received a visit from some *Commissaires de Section*, who came in consequence of a denunciation made by some blockhead, or rascal, that I had arms concealed in my house. I made them sensible of the impropriety of their conduct, told them that I had no arms, and that if I had, they should not touch one of them. That in such case, they must apply to me through their minister of Foreign Affairs, and ask me to cede them. I insisted that the man who had presumed to make this denunciation should be seized, and then I would demonstrate the falsehood, that he might be punished. The scene finished by apologies on their part. Last night there was a general visit and search throughout the town for arms, and I presume for persons also. It still continues. Between nine and ten, the Commissary called on me with many apologies, and took a note of my reply, so that we met and parted good friends.

You will see by all this, my dear Sir, that I have sufficient cause to take offence and depart, if I were so inclined; but I

will stay, if possible, so as to preserve to you the most perfect liberty of action. I do not indeed feel offended at what is done by the people, because they cannot be supposed to understand the law of nations, and because they are in a state of fury which is inconceivable, and which leaves them liable to all impressions, and renders them capable of all excesses. I shall endeavor, nevertheless, to preserve the proper firmness, and let what will happen. I hope that though my friends should have occasion to lament my fate, they will never be obliged to blush for my conduct.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO M. LEBRUN, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

Translation.

Paris, September 1st, 1792.

Sir,

Your letter of the 30th of August was not delivered to me until four o'clock yesterday. I shall reply to it in detail, and with the shortest delay possible.

You do me the honor to tell me, that '*I am able to fulfil the engagements entered into by Mr Short, relative to the eight hundred thousand dollars to be held in North America at your disposal, for the purchases necessary to supply your colonies.*' I have already observed to you, Sir, and I now repeat it, that the care of making the payments of our debt to France was confided to Mr Short, and that *I have never been authorised to meddle with it.* I venture to add, Sir, that you have in your own office proofs of this fact.

Your predecessors informed me, that they had received from the French Minister at Philadelphia the copy of a letter, written to him by Mr Hamilton, our Minister of Finance, and dated the eighth of March. You will perceive, that Mr Hamilton there says;—'After the instructions given to Mr Short, after the known progress of these operations, and from some

passages in one of his letters of the 12th of November last, *I conclude with certainty*, that he has paid all arrears of interest and reimbursements of capital become due up to the close of the year 1791.'—He adds (with respect to the four hundred thousand dollars, which it was agreed to pay in the course of the year 1792) that 'this sum will be in *anticipation of what becomes due at a future time.*' Here I should observe to you, Sir, that all engagements, made by Mr Short, will be fulfilled by the United States, with the greatest precision.

I pray you moreover, Sir, to fix your attention upon another very important fact, which I had the honor to lay before you. Mr Short had left in the hands of our bankers at Amsterdam very great sums for many months, while waiting for definitive arrangements to be made with regard to the payments, arrangements which were not made during his mission. On the 30th of July last, I stated to the Commissaries of the national treasury, that it was impossible for me to do anything decisive on this point, until I should receive the orders of my government, (*les ordres de ma cour.**) At this time, Mr Short urged me to pay over to the Commissioners of the treasury the money, which was at his disposal, and the Commissioners on their side begged me to make the same payment. Accordingly, having agreed with them on the rate of exchange, by which we should be regulated at the time, always excepting the definitive arrangements to be made with the person, who should be appointed for this purpose by the United States, I requested Mr Short, by letter, on the 6th of August to give orders to our bankers to pay to

* This expression, '*ma cour,*' gave great offence to the French Ministers, who were members of an executive council of a *Republic*, so called, of twenty days' standing. They considered it a monarchical phrase, and looked upon it as an indignity coming thus to them from the representative of a republican government. They wrote about it to Genet, who, in a letter to the Secretary of State, represents it as having caused displeasure, and as one of the reasons for dissatisfaction with Mr Morris.

Messieurs Hoguer, Grand and Company, bankers designated by the Commissioners of the treasury, the sum of one million six hundred and twenty five thousand florins, (florins de banque) which, at said rate of exchange, amounted to six millions of French money.

You will have the goodness to observe, Sir, that according to the calculation of the Commissioners, there was due to France, on the first of July last, a sum of six millions and a half; that in this sum was included that of three millions one hundred and fifty-seven thousand seven hundred and fifty-eight livres, which was not taken into Mr Hamilton's calculation, and of which a part at least is still to be verified. You will be pleased to remark also, that in this calculation the payments, which have been actually made in America, are not included, which make still another item of more than two millions. It follows then, at all events, that the reimbursements to be made, up to the present time, are all discharged. I would observe farther, that I am in no way authorised to dispose of any sums, which were or might be in the hands of our bankers at Amsterdam, and that all I have done, or could do, was to apply to Mr Short, who alone has authority in this matter.

It still remains for me to recall another very important fact to your mind, which you will find authenticated in the same letter of Mr Hamilton; that owing to the extra expenses occasioned by our Indian war, it was impossible for him to promise the payment of the sum of four hundred thousand dollars, at any nearer intervals than those specified, the last of which extends to the first of December, 1792. You may judge, after this exposition, whether it would be possible for me to go farther than to make the offer I have already made, of earnestly soliciting my Government to lend you the assistance you demand. A proposal which you refused to accept.

As to the suspension of the King, Sir, you must surely agree with me, that a Minister has no right to express any opinion whatever, without the previous orders of his nation. And

when I spoke of it to you, I was not disposed to give any opinion; nor at your solicitation, did I express anything farther, than that you might perceive that even if it were possible for me to run the risk of committing myself, by consenting to the pecuniary arrangements which you desired, and which were not confided to me by my government, you would still be unable to claim from them the execution of my engagements; for though they might recognise your authority, yet they would consider it necessary for you to wait my new credentials.

In the letter, which I had the honor of writing to you on the twenty-first of August, I informed you that it was my intention to remain in Paris; but the style of yours of the thirtieth of August obliges me to request from you a passport to leave France. I shall travel by short stages with my own horses, taking the route to England by Calais. I shall leave my house in its present condition, my secretary, and part of my family, till I receive orders from the United States. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO WILLIAM SHORT.*

Paris, September 9th, 1792.

Dear Sir,

Yours of the fourth instant arrived yesterday afternoon, and I write now, that I may be in time for the post tomorrow. I believe the delay of my letter was not in this city. As the six millions are, I suppose, paid, it is not necessary to dilate on that subject.

In regard to the extent of my powers, I will explain to you my ideas thereon. At first I supposed that the management of what relates to our debt was in some sort a needful appendage to this mission. Mr Jefferson's letter committing to me *ex-*

* At this time Minister Resident from the United States at the Hague.

pressly an incidental negotiation, respecting a small part of it, undeceived me. Counting however on your concurrence in such measures as might appear proper, I should have gone on to prepare with the Minister a plan for the final liquidation of this object, could I have prevailed on him to attend to it. I have since had occasion, when I treated with the Commissaries of the treasury, to examine a little more minutely into my powers, so far as they relate to the debt, and I found that the management of it was committed entirely, and of course exclusively to you. Whether the knowledge they must have acquired before the present moment, that nothing final is done, joined to the idea that you are in Spain, will induce them to address their orders to me, I know not ; and you will, I trust, excuse me for adding that I hope not.

Of all things I wish to steer clear of pecuniary transactions, because they involve a species of responsibility which is most irksome, and expose the agent to the chance of being called by every calumniator, to answer at the bar of public opinion.

You tell me, in the very moment you express an apprehension as to the validity of transactions with the present government, that you would be glad that I should take up certain of our obligations, &c. &c. On this head I must observe to you, that the informations you have received and communicated to me respecting the state of the account, and the objections made by the Secretary of the Treasury, prove beyond a possibility of doubt, that our government do not mean or wish that I should meddle therein. I have not received a line from the Secretary of the Treasury of any kind.

To return however to your wish. You will doubtless see with me, that our obligations do not *constitute*, but only *evidence* our debt. To possess ourselves of them, therefore, otherwise than by due payment, would not cancel or alter the debt. And from the moment you impeach the right of the present government to receive the money, you invalidate any transactions respecting it which they may make. This observation I make for your consideration ; it cannot in any wise affect my

conduct, because I am for the reasons already mentioned quite unauthorised, and indeed indirectly prohibited from acting in that behalf.

Among the many scenes of bloodshed, which have of late been exhibited, you will lament the fate of the Duke de la Rochefoucault, killed in the presence of his aged mother. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, September 10th, 1792.

Dear Sir,

The object of this is merely to transmit a letter forwarded to me by Mr Cathalan, who desires me to communicate the scarcity to my friends, and at the same time mentions, that if I will encourage him thereto, he will immediately set off to America to procure wheat. My answer of this date is enclosed.

By the first convenient opportunity I shall write to you respecting the state of things here, and I shall now send with this letter the several gazettes. We have had one week of unchecked murders, in which some thousands have perished in this city. It began with between two and three hundred of the clergy, who had been shut up because they would not take the oaths prescribed by the law, and which they said were contrary to their conscience. Thence, *these executors of speedy justice* went to the *Abbaye*, where the persons were confined, who were at court on the tenth of August. These were despatched also, and afterwards they visited the other prisons. All those who were confined either on the accusation, or suspicion of crimes, were destroyed. Madame de Lamballe was, I believe, the only woman killed, and she was beheaded and embowelled, the head and entrails paraded on pikes through the streets, and the body dragged after them. They

continued I am told in the neighborhood of the Temple, until the Queen looked out at this horrid spectacle.

Yesterday the prisoners from Orleans were put to death at Versailles. The destruction began here about five in the afternoon on Sunday, the second instant. A guard had been sent a few days since to make the Duke de la Rochefoucault prisoner. He was on his way to Paris under their escort with his wife and mother, when he was taken out of his carriage and killed. The ladies were taken back to la Roche Guyonne where they are now in a state of arrestation. Monsieur de Montmorin was among those slain at the Abbaye. You will recollect, that a petition was signed by many thousands to displace the Mayor on account of his conduct on the twentieth of June. The signing of this petition is considered as a sufficient proof of the crime of *Feuillantism*, and it was in contemplation with some to put all those who were guilty of signing that petition to death. This measure seems, however, to be suspended, for the present at least ; but as there is no real executive authority, the plan may be easily resumed, should it suit the views of those who enjoy the confidence of that part of the people, who are now active. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

M. LEBRUN TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Translation.

Paris, September 16th, 1792.

Sir,

By the answer you have returned to the letter, which I had the honor of writing to you on the thirtieth of August, I see that you have misunderstood certain expressions therein contained, and which were used relatively to circumstances. My object, in speaking to you of the existing Government, was to prove to you that it could not be dissolved, nor lose anything of its authority, so long as the nation had an existence. In

consequence of this just and incontestible principle, I have supposed that you might reside still in Paris, await here new credentials, and new instructions from your constituents, and, finally, continue to treat upon affairs interesting to both nations.

You must be persuaded, Sir, that you would have found us eager to give you satisfaction, on every point founded in justice and reason. And as, doubtless, you would have brought forward no others, the result of our conferences, and of your proceedings towards us, would have been followed by the success you desired.

As to the aversion, which you appear to feel to our present government, I think it right to remind you of a fact, which comes in aid of the principle just cited. It is this. When the inhabitants of North America resolved to separate themselves from England, and to gain their liberty, they sent representatives to France, to negotiate with the government, which made no difficulty in admitting them to a conference, and even concluding with them a treaty of friendship and commerce, as well as of alliance. Hardly had the United Provinces called a Congress, when Dr Franklin was recognised by us in quality of Minister Plenipotentiary.* He was admitted as one of the Diplomatic Corps to the audiences of the Court and the Minister. France, also, on her part, sent an accredited Minister to Congress. Yet, Sir, you know, that at that time no decisive measures had been taken for the establishment of a government in America, nor could there exist any settled government, since war was still carried on for the cause of independence and liberty.

Our present position, therefore, and that of your country at that time, are very different. Of this you will be further convinced by the following fact.

Before our revolution we had a government, which has

*The first Congress was convened in 1774, but Franklin was not received as Minister Plenipotentiary in France, till after the treaty in 1778.

subsisted continually since. It has, indeed, taken another form, but this form has been thus determined by the liberty and safety of the country. Besides, Sir, you, who were born in the midst of a free people, should regard the present affairs of France in a very different light, from that in which they appear to all other foreign ministers residing in Paris. We maintain the same cause with your country; our principles and your own should be the same; and by a natural train of consequences, there can be no reason against your residence in Paris.

I wish, Sir, that this explanation of facts, as well known to you as to myself, may induce you to reconsider the subject, and decide you to change your resolution.

However this may be, Sir, I have had the passport prepared, which you requested of me; it is now with the municipality to go through the necessary forms. I hope to have it ready for you tomorrow.

You see, Sir, by the subjoined extract from the reply of the Minister of Public Contributions, that you have entire satisfaction on every point contained in your letter of the 21st of August last. I have the honor to observe to you, that the trifling personal casualties you have experienced, with regard to your effects, wines, &c. are, as you are aware, a consequence of the agitation inseparable from a great revolution.*

I have the honor to be, with sincere regard, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

LEBRUN.

* This alludes to certain articles being detained in the custom house, and charged with duties, which, as belonging to a foreign minister, ought to be admitted free. Mr Morris paid the duties, but they were afterwards returned by order of the government.

TO M. LEBRUN.

Translation.

Paris, September 17th, 1792.

Sir,

I have had the honor of receiving your letter of the 16th. After the explanations contained in it, I shall not again recur to that of the 30th of August, and as it was that which decided me to leave France, I now resume my determination to remain here, and await the orders of my government.

As to my personal opinions, Sir, they are of no importance in so serious an affair, but you may be sure, that I have never questioned the right of any people to govern themselves according to their own pleasure. For these many years I have desired sincerely, that France might enjoy all the liberty and all the happiness possible ; and I am confident that I express the sentiments of the United States, in assuring you that in this wish all my countrymen unite.

I have the honor, Sir, to renew my application for a passport for the interior. In testifying to my rank, it will preserve me from the interruptions to which one is liable at the present time. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, September 19th, 1792.

Dear Sir,

I shall confine myself, on the present occasion, to transmitting copies of my correspondence with the ministry, on the subject of the conference mentioned to you in mine of the thirtieth of last month. I transmit, however, a copy of what I wrote on the twentieth of August, because the answer of the eighth of this month would not be otherwise intelligible. I will not at present make any comments on this correspondence, and I do not know whether I shall ever mention it again.

I send you also, as the best means of communicating the state of this city and kingdom, the short but lively picture drawn of them in the Assembly by Monsieur Masuyer, on Saturday last, the fifteenth instant, and the report made on Sunday morning, by Monsieur Roland, the minister of the Interior.

I wish it were in my power to communicate a more flattering prospect, than is held out by these extracts. It gives me pain to write, and will, I am sure, give you pain to read, the distressful state of a country for which we have both a sincere regard. All which I can do under present circumstances, is, to be silent. Bad news have a flight so rapid, that I will not add to their wings.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, September 27th, 1792.

Dear Sir,

In my last I transmitted copies of my correspondence with the Minister, respecting the subject of the conversation mentioned in mine of the thirtieth of last month, of which, as well as of those of the seventeenth and twenty-second, copies are here enclosed.

I think it is proper to mention to you now a circumstance relating to that conversation, because it may explain transactions connected therewith. I had good reason to believe, that a private speculation was at the bottom of the proposals made to me, and the extreme urgency which was exhibited by one of the conferees, who had been designated to me as concerned therein, tended not a little to confirm the information I had received. The wrath excited by the unwillingness on my part to jump over all the bounds of my powers and instructions, did by no means lessen, but came in support of the same idea. Since that period I have been asked by a person, who said he was offered a bill drawn by the government here on the treasu-

ry of the United States, whether such a bill would be paid. I expressed my surprise, and was told that this bill would be for the sum decreed by the Assembly to be employed in purchasing supplies for the colony of St Domingo. I observed that it seemed a strange procedure either to sell or buy such a bill; because the vender could only employ the money in America, and of course need not risk a draft; and the purchaser, who must make the expenditure, could not, I supposed, find his account in the transaction. This led to an explanation. The bill was to be paid for in Assignats at par, six or nine months hence, and the produce was to be employed in purchasing manufactures suitable to the colony in this country. I told the person who applied to me, that I did not think this would be considered in America as falling within the decree, and that no good reason could be assigned for paying, under great *disadvantages* in Philadelphia, what could be paid with great advantage in Paris, when the sum paid was not to be expended in the United States but in France. At length the true object of this application to me came out. I discovered it was merely a scheme of speculation to be carried into effect, if I could be induced to recommend the payment, under what was known to be a favorite idea with me, viz. the expending *in America* what we owe to France, and *for the support of the colony of St Domingo*. As my concurrence could not be hoped for, I believe the plan is abandoned, but perhaps it is only abandoned in appearance.

I also take the liberty to enclose the extract of a letter from Mr Short respecting M. de Lafayette, with my answer. I understand that he was forwarded from Luxemburg privately on the route to Vienna, and had got as far as Brissaw several days ago. I presume that his treatment will depend very much on the success of the military operations. If the allied monarchs, finding themselves disappointed in their expectations from the present campaign, are obliged to look forward to more extensive and more permanent efforts, they will probably endeavor to gain one of the great parties in this

country ; and should they turn their eyes towards the *Quatre-vingt-neufs*, or *Feuillants*, they will naturally consider M. de Lafayette as the most fitting instrument to be employed, and he will naturally desire to aid in the establishment of the party and the principles, which he considers as true supporters of liberty in this country. For you will observe, that in like manner as the Clerical and Aristocratic parties considered the Assembly in 1789 as a usurper, the leaders of that Assembly affixed on the Jacobins the same charge of usurpation, and now the leaders of the last revolution are charged by some of their brethren with Feillantism.

You will see by the gazettes, that there is the same enmity between the present chiefs, which prevailed heretofore against those whom they considered as their common enemies, and if either of the present parties should get the better, it would probably again divide ; for party, like matter, is divisible *ad infinitum*, because things which depend on human opinion can never be tried by any common standard. And not only is it unavoidable, that there should be differences among different men, but it is even uncommon to find in the same man the same sentiments, for a continued length of time, even upon the same subject, for either the circumstances change or else the man.

You will see that the King of Prussia has made some overtures for treaty, which were not listened to. I consider the offer as a mere military manœuvre, because it is not possible that treaty should succeed in the present moment, and because preparations are making for more vigorous efforts the ensuing campaign. I am told that both Sweden and Denmark have acceded to the league, and that they count on the assistance of Great Britain, should that become necessary.

On this last subject much may be said. Of the King's personal opinions there can be no doubt, and I have some little reason to believe, that not only his ministers, but the great mass of property and interest in that kingdom would readily embark in a contest to crush opinions, which are considered fatal to the

peace and order of civil society. And you know of how little consequence it is, as to human action, whether opinions be or be not well founded. On the other hand, there is a party in England, not inconsiderable as to numbers, and very important from the activity of its members, who, joining to high notions of civil liberty some mixture of the enmities and prejudices of particular sects of religion, aim at a subversion of Monarchy, Hierarchy, and Aristocracy. But as any great convulsion must necessarily overturn the stupendous fabric of national credit, which has been erected within this century, there are among the chieftains even of this party several, who rather wish that the battles for freedom should be fought on French than English ground. Yet these same men, should it become necessary to take a decided part, would range themselves, I think, under the revolutionary standard. But in this uncertain state of men and things the ministry have to fear from inaction, that the principles of the government will be sapped, and they have to fear a total defeat, should they declare war without first securing the aid of the opposition. This they have been laboring at for some time, but with little effect, because there are two or three great places desired by both parties. Of these intrigues, however, Mr Pinckney will, I doubt not, give you ample details, as they are closely connected with the objects of his mission. I have little doubt but that a junction, or coalition, between these two parties would enable the government to act with all the energy it could wish, and there seems to me to be a little cause not much noticed, but of considerable effect, which may lead them into a war. It is the legal advantage to be gained over those, who, in supporting certain opinions, may in case of war be brought under the statute of treasons as adhering to the foreign enemy.

An opponent more dreadful than any of the armies which can be sent against this country, or any of the parties by which it may be distracted, seems to be preparing his vengeance. Famine is among the things on which to calculate. The crop in Sicily was short; that of the Southern provinces, always in-

sufficient, is much less than usual. The supplies usually drawn from the coast of Barbary will, I am told, be totally cut off by those powers, who, in consequence of the affair of the tenth of August, mean to break with this country. The grain provinces on the north and east, if not possessed by the enemy, will be totally exhausted by the two armies; and Poland, whose granaries are shut up till the next spring, will be engrossed by the enemy to furnish his own magazines. I consider it therefore as next to certain, that the want here will be very great during the ensuing year; and as this must, by the end of December, become apparent to everybody, most other resources will then be shut by the hand of mercantile speculation. Hence it would seem, that our merchants would act wisely in sending hither cargoes of flour, and I have but one apprehension in recommending it, which is, that, from the laxity of government, property of that sort may become precarious, when the price has got so high as to oppress the poor, and yet it must so rise, or else the merchant will suffer, because the exchange cuts off a great proportion of what he receives.

I submit, my dear Sir, to your better judgment all these ideas, persuaded that you will turn them to the best account; and I pray you to believe in that sincere regard with which I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

GEORGE WASHINGTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Philadelphia, October 20th, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

Although your letter of the tenth of June, which I have received, did not paint the prospects of France in the most pleasing colors, yet the events which have since taken place give a more gloomy aspect to the public affairs of that kingdom, than your letter gave reason to apprehend.

A thousand circumstances, besides our distance from the

theatre of action, made it improbable that we should have, in this country, a fair statement of facts and causes through the medium of the public prints; and I have received no other accounts, than what have come in that channel. But taking up the most favorable of these, gloomy indeed appears the situation of France at this juncture. But it is hardly probable that even you, who are on the spot, can say with any precision how these things will terminate; much less can we, at this distance, pretend to augur the event. We can only repeat the sincere wish, that much happiness may arise to the French nation, and to mankind in general, out of the severe evils which are inseparable from so important a revolution.

In the present state of things we cannot expect, that any commercial treaty can now be formed with France; but I have no doubt of your embracing the proper moment of arrangement, and of doing whatever may be in your power for the substantial interest of our country.

The affairs of the United States go on well. There are some few clouds in our political hemisphere, but I trust that the bright sun of our prosperity will disperse them.

The Indians on our western and southern frontiers are still troublesome, but such measures are taken as will, I presume, prevent any serious mischief from them; I confess, however, that I do not believe these tribes will ever be brought to a quiescent state, so long as they may be under an influence which is hostile to the rising greatness of these states.

From the complexion of some of our newspapers, foreigners would be led to believe, that inveterate political dissensions exist among us, and that we are on the very verge of disunion; but the fact is otherwise. The great body of the people now feel the advantages of the general government, and would not, I am persuaded, do anything that should destroy it; but this kind of representations is an evil, which must be placed in opposition to the infinite benefits resulting from a free press; and I am sure you need not be told, that in this country a personal difference in political sentiments is often made to take the garb of general dissensions.

From the Department of State you are, I am informed, furnished with such papers and documents from time to time, as will keep you more particularly informed of the state of our affairs. I shall therefore add nothing further to this letter, than assurances of being always and sincerely yours, &c.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, October 23d, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

Yours of the twenty-first of June is at length safely arrived. Poor Lafayette! Your letter for him must remain with me yet some time. His enemies here are as virulent as ever, and I can give you no better proof than this. Among the King's papers was found nothing of what his enemies wished and expected, except his correspondence with M. de Lafayette, which breathes from beginning to end the purest sentiments of freedom. It is therefore kept secret, while he stands accused of designs in conjunction with the dethroned monarch to enslave his country.

The fact respecting this correspondence is communicated to me, by a person to whom it was related confidentially by one of the parties who examined it. You will have seen in my letters to Mr Jefferson, a proposition made by Mr Short respecting M. de Lafayette, with my reply. I had very good reason to apprehend, that our interference at that time would have been injurious to him, but I hope that a moment will soon offer in which something may be done for his relief. In reading my correspondence with Mr Short you must consider, that I wrote to the French and Austrian government, as each would take the liberty to read my letters.

You will have seen also that in my letters to Mr Jefferson, I hint at the dangers attending a residence in this city. Some of the sanguinary events which have taken place, and which

were partial executions of great plans. will point to a natural interpretation thereof; but these were not what I contemplated. Should we ever meet, I will entertain you with the recital of many things, which it would be improper to commit to paper, at least for the present. You will have seen, that the King is accused of high crimes and misdemeanors; but I verily believe that he wished sincerely for this nation the enjoyment of the utmost degree of liberty, which their situation and circumstances will permit. He wished for a good constitution, but unfortunately he had not the means to obtain it, or if he had he was thwarted by those about him. What may be his fate God only knows, but history informs us, that the passage of dethroned monarchs is short from the prison to the grave.

I have mentioned to Mr Jefferson, repeatedly, my wish to have positive instructions and orders for my government. I need not tell you, Sir, how agreeable this would be to me, and what a load it would take from my mind. At the same time I am fully sensible, that it may be inconvenient to give me such orders. The United States may wish to temporize, and see how things are likely to end, and in such case, leaving me at large with the right reserved to avow or disavow me according to circumstances and events, is for the government an eligible position. My part in the play is not quite so eligible; but although I wish the Senate to be sensible of this, I am far from wishing that any precipitate step be taken to relieve me from it, for I know how contemptible is every private consideration, when compared with the public interests. One step however seems natural, viz. to say that before any new letters of credence are given, it will be proper to know to whom they are to be directed, because the Convention, a mere temporary body, is to be succeeded by some fixed form, and it may be a long time before any such form will be adopted.

Mr Jefferson, from the materials in his possession, will be able to give you an accurate account of the military events. I discover three capital errors in the conduct of the Duke of

Brunswick. First, his proclamation arrogated rights, which on no construction could belong to him or his employers, and contained threats which no circumstances could warrant, and which in no supposable success could be executed. They tended however to unite the nation in opposing him, seeing that no hope remained for those who had taken any part in the revolution; and the conduct observed towards Monsieur de Lafayette and his companions was a severe comment on the cruelty of the rest. Thus in the same moment he wounded the pride, insulted the feelings, and alarmed the fears of all France. And by his thundering menaces to protect the royal family, he plunged them into the situation from which he meant to extricate them.

The second error was, not to dash at Paris the instant he received the news of the affair of the tenth. He should then have advanced at all hazards, and if in so doing he had declared to the several Generals and armies, that he expected their assistance to restore their dethroned prince and violated constitution, I am persuaded that he would have met with as much support as opposition. I learn within these two days, that the delegates of Lorraine and Alsace had so little hope, or rather were so thoroughly persuaded that those provinces would join the enemy, that they made unusual haste to come forward, lest they should be apprehended. Great activity in that moment would have done wonders; but then he was not ready.

The third great error was, that after waiting so long he came forward at all this season. By menacing the frontiers with great and increasing force, vast numbers of the militia would have been drawn to the utmost verge of the French territory. The difficulty of subsisting them there, would have been extreme. By taking strong and good positions, his troops would have been preserved in full vigor, and the French, wasted by disease, tired of inaction, and stimulated by their natural impatience and impetuosity of temper, would have forced their Generals to attack, even if *they* had the prudence to be quiet. The consequence of such attack, excepting always the will of God,

must have been a complete victory on his part, and then it would have been next to impossible for them to escape. Then the towns would have surrendered, believing the business to be over, and he might have come as far forward this autumn as the needful transportation of stores would permit. Next spring France would have found it almost impossible to subsist the armies needful for the defence in that part of the country, which is most defensible, and of consequence her enemy would have reached the point from which he lately retreated, without the smallest difficulty.

The appearances are so vague and contradictory, that I cannot pretend to tell you whether the alliance will or will not be preserved for the next campaign. If I were to hazard conjectures on the present state of things, it might cast suspicions where I have not sufficient ground, and therefore I will bury them in my own bosom, lest accident should put this letter into improper hands. France has a strong ally in the feelings of those nations, who are subject to despotism, but for that very reason, she has a mortal enemy in every Prince. If, as is very possible, the league should hold firm till next spring, it will then have gained considerable auxiliaries, and I am very much mistaken if this nation will make as great efforts as those she is now making. The character of nations must be taken into consideration in all political questions, and that of France has ever been an enthusiastic inconstancy. They soon get tired of a thing. They adopt without examination, and reject without sufficient cause. They are now agog with their republic, and may perhaps adopt some form of government with a huzza; but that they will adopt a good form, or, having adopted, adhere to it, is what I do not believe. There is a great body of royalists in the country, who do not now declare themselves, because it would be certain death, but a favorable occasion would bring them out of their holes.

The factions here are violent, and among those who administer the government there is not, I am told, that degree of character which lays hold of the esteem and respect of mankind,

but rather the contrary. In their opponents there is a nervous temper, which sticks at nothing, and if I see rightly there is in the current of their affairs a strong eddy, or counter tide, which may change materially both men and things. Yet let what will happen, I think it hardly possible that they should blunder as much as the emigrants, and I am prone to believe, that in war and politics the folly of our adversaries constitutes our greatest force. The future prospect, therefore, is involved in mist and darkness.

There is but one sovereign in Europe, the Empress of Russia, who is not in the scale of talents considerably below par. The Emperor, who it is said is consumptive and cannot live long, is now much influenced by Manfredi, a statesman of the Italian school, who takes insincerity for wisdom. The Prussian Cabinet is far from strong. Leuchsesini, an able man, is said to be rising in influence there, but there is such a mixture of lust and folly in the chief, that no one man can keep things steady. The alliance with Vienna is disagreeable to the Prussians, and particularly to the inhabitants of Berlin, which may have some influence in destroying it, and his Majesty has given three strong proofs since his accession, that he is by no means nice on the subject of public faith. The invasion of Brabant will, I am persuaded, alarm both Britain and Holland, but whether they will confine themselves to court intrigue, or come into the field, is doubtful.

Thus you will perceive, Sir, that nothing can be predicted with tolerable certainty respecting the affairs of this country, either internal or external, at the present moment. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, October 23d, 1792.

Dear Sir,

My last was of the twenty-seventh of September. Since that period, and within a few days, I have received yours of

the sixteenth of June. In sending the gazettes, it would be well, I think, to put them in an envelope open at each end, and direct them to the Consul at Havre, who should be desired to forward them to me by the stage. This will avoid the heavy postage.

The unexpected events, which have taken place in this country since your letter was written, and of which you will have been informed before this reaches you, will show you that I cannot, until I receive the President's farther orders, take up any of the objects to which it alludes, not having indeed the proper powers. I apprehend also that the United States will wish to see a little into the establishment of the new Republic, before they take any decided steps in relation to it. In this case I may be a long time without such orders, which is to me a distressing circumstance, because it involves a degree of responsibility for events, which no human being can foresee. It may indeed be replied, that in a position like mine, the proper conduct is to preserve a strict neutrality, and of course to do nothing ; but cases often arise in which to do nothing is taking a part. I need not state the many situations of that sort which occur. I had it in contemplation to leave Paris, and visit Bordeaux and Marseilles, but I found it necessary to continue here for the sake of such of my countrymen as were in this city, and who might, in the madness of the moment, have been exposed to danger, but certainly to inconvenience. A proof of which is, that the English, who remained after Lord Gower went away, found it so difficult to obtain passports, though possessed of those he had given, that many, after waiting for weeks in fruitless attendance, went off at all hazards without them.

I informed you in my last, that I believed the plan for speculating on the sum appropriated for St Domingo, was abandoned, but a further attempt was made by the Minister, who pressed me again on the subject, and I of course again declined, referring him to Mr Short, who in fact is alone empowered in that respect. What they may have since done, I

know not. The intercourse with Holland is much interrupted just now, and a letter which Mr Pinckney forwarded for me by Colonel Smith, from Mr Short, and which was put into the postoffice at Dieppe, has not yet come to hand. I suppose that it relates to M. de Lafayette, who is, I am told, at Wezel, and of course in the power of his Prussian Majesty.

The gazettes will inform you of the retreat of the Prussian army. I have been told on good authority, that the cannonade of the twentieth of September was only to amuse ; that during its continuance the Duke of Brunswick made a masterly movement, by which he opened to himself the roads to Rheims, and to Châlons ; that the French army was so much in his power, that he might either have driven them away and dissipated them, or if under every disadvantage they would risk an action, that he could have cut them to pieces. And why did he not ? To this natural question two answers are given. It is said, that the plan fixed for the campaign was, that the King of Prussia, at the head of his army, should form the point of a wedge, of which two columns of Austrian troops should form the angles. The right, under General Clairfayt, to penetrate the Loisons ; the left, under the Prince de Hohenloe, to penetrate, after masking Thionville and Metz, to Châlons. That by this means the magazines, sick, and wounded, of the three armies, would have been completely covered, and the police of the country been maintained by the emigrants, under the immediate orders of the King's brothers. Another body of troops was at the same time to make a powerful diversion, or to penetrate, as circumstances might permit, or direct, from the Brisgaw.

You will observe, that all which depended on the Austrians, in the plan above supposed, completely failed, and that in consequence, if the King of Prussia had advanced any farther, the French would have closed in upon his rear, and of course his sick, his wounded, and his magazines, would have been sacrificed, perhaps his retreat cut off. It is said that the three days consumed in treaty, were to give time to the columns in ques-

tion to advance, and by their demonstrations to drive off the corps, which infected one of his flanks, and menaced the other, and to show at the same time that he had completely performed his stipulations. In effect he had surmounted the obstacles, which nature had opposed to his march, had disentangled himself from the Ardennes, and was complete in force, and in view of the two great plains of Champagne, the one leading by Rheims, and the other by Châlons, to his object.

It is said, that without the aid of the columns in question, his farther progress would have been useless, because he could not detach to the right and left so as to cut off the communication between this city, and the southern and western parts of the Empire. To this it is added, that a season of which there is no parallel in the memory of man, and disease beyond all reasonable expectation, had almost crippled the Duke's army before he could extricate himself from the defiles, and drive off the parties which were in possession of them.

This is one solution of the events, which took place subsequent to the twentieth. Another is of a different nature; it is said that Monsieur Dumouriez, convinced that an opposition to the combined forces would prove unavailing, and supposing that the rivalry of Austria and Prussia must prevent any cordiality of union; being farther induced to believe, that the Prussian cabinet would pursue its own separate interest when occasion should offer, without much regard to previous stipulations, and would in fact, rather sacrifice somewhat even of its particular interest, than aggrandize in any degree a rival, sore from ancient and recent injuries; Dumouriez, prompted and encouraged by these ideas, sought eagerly the occasions of treaty with the King of Prussia. That at length he succeeded so far as to show that Prince, that the present was a favorable moment for giving a final blow to the House of Austria, and that France and Prussia would find immense advantage in a union, by which he might take up again the business he had abandoned in Poland, and thereby foil the schemes of both Russia and Austria. That a more evident advantage, though

not more certain, would be found in a subsidy of *two hundred millions of livres*, and that he must see the danger of the war in its present situation, and might thence the more easily estimate the advantage of abandoning it.

These reasonings are said to have had the desired effect, and that a kind of treaty was entered into; one article of which related to the Royal Family of this country, which is to be set at liberty. I have been told farther, that the Executive Council here will not confirm that part of the bargain which relates to the subsidy and the Royal Family, saying, which is true enough, that they are in this respect without authority.

I must slightly mention another solution of the late movements, because it is possible that it may be well founded. A lady, I think Madame de Guisne, but certainly the daughter of Madame de Polignac, is said to have made an impression on his Majesty, who is, it seems, very susceptible of violent, though not of lasting affection. This young lady is said to have been ill treated by her mother, and others who are among the principal emigrants, and to have used her influence with the King to avenge the slights of her countrymen and relations. In the midst of all these different accounts, of which perhaps not one is true, the leaders here seem to consider Prussia as weighing no longer in the scale against them. Dumouriez is on his march to Brussels, in which he means to take up his winter quarters, and there is in this more of cool good sense than at first sight may appear.

I have already communicated to you the state of things here, in what regards subsistence. The country, late the seat of war, is totally consumed. Never abundant, it is now so bare that the inhabitants will be reduced to the utmost straits, and although the northern frontier is not yet in the same state, it would be not far from it before the end of January, if the whole of the French army, late in the centre, were stationed there. This army is now very numerous, and, from the want of discipline, consumes much more than is usually allotted to

one of equal number. It is furthermore very sickly, and of course the followers must be greatly increased. If he can penetrate into Flanders and Brabant, he not only saves the provisions which would have been consumed in France, but he destroys so much of the resources of the enemy. If he can create a revolution, which may be effected by a very small number of the people while supported by a victorious army, he obliges the Emperor to confine his efforts to a single side of France, namely, that defended by the Ardennes in part, and in part by the Rhine. And on this side, it will be very difficult to make any serious impression, so long as the French continue in their present mind. These objects justify some risk by M. Dumouriez; and he is better able to calculate the extent of that risk, than any mere spectator, because he has long had intelligence in that country. The undertaking is not however without considerable difficulty. There are not indeed any strong towns in his way, but there are three strong positions, of which the first is near Mons; the second still stronger on a hill about half way (to the best of my recollection) between Mons and Brussels; and the third not far from Brussels itself. The military face of that country is, you know, understood by all military men with perfect exactness, having been the theatre of war for the two last centuries; of course all the advantages, which it gives to disciplined armies, will be made use of by those who are to defend it. Add to this, that we approach the end of October, and though we are just now flattered with fine weather, it is not to be expected that those who go due north will meet with warm nights and long days in November. A failure therefore must be fatal to many; but this is little thought of here just now, because there is no want of men. It will count, however, in the next season. Fortune has hitherto smiled on the French arms in a manner unexpected to themselves, and it may perhaps continue to do so. Much of this is in my opinion owing to the folly of their opponents, who seem to have fostered the determination to reduce them

under a military despotism. The Divine justice will never, I hope, permit such impious plans to succeed ; and I always consider Princes, and Generals, and Statesmen, as mere instruments, and generally blind instruments, in the hands of the Almighty to work out his ends by ways, which are for the most part inscrutable to us.

I do not say anything about the incursions into Savoy and Germany, both brilliant, and the former of which bids fair to extend the French Republic to the foot of the Alps, because these things, fully detailed in the gazettes, speak for themselves.

As to the domestic affairs here, they are by no means quiet. The great majority of the Convention is united in opposition to a few members, who are joined to some chiefs in this city, and meditate further revolutions. They aver that those, whom they call the *Brissotines*, had no wish to overturn the monarchy, but only to get the loaves and fishes for themselves and their friends. That the affair of the tenth of August happened not only without their aid, but contrary to their wish. That having happened, they did indeed take advantage of it to obtain the executive power for their particular friends, but even they would not consolidate the revolution by destroying its enemies ; a business, say they, which was effected on the second of September, and the following days, and which those who now safely enjoy the fruits of it pretend to blame.

The *Brissotines* on the other hand contend, that they alone are the true friends of republican government, for which they have incessantly labored, ever since the second Assembly met. That the attachment they professed to the late constitution was only simulated, and was necessary to cover their attack upon it ; that in their various decrees they constantly kept in view the advantage to be gained by obliging the King, either to sanction what (though agreeable to the popular wish) was contrary to the constitution, in which case the constitution would have become a dead letter, and have left the field of contest open between the King and the legislature, or else, if the King

withheld his sanction, it turned the voice of the people against him, and left him in consequence exposed to a successful attack, whenever the favorable moment should present itself. That it was they, in short, who brought forward the plan of an army of twenty thousand republicans under the walls of Paris, and who took private and effectual measures to bring that army into the field, if, as was apprehended, the King should put a veto on the decree. That it was owing to these measures, that the Bretons and Marsellois, and other *Federés*, were on the spot to execute the plans of the tenth of August, &c.

These are the outlines of the arguments made use of on each side to convince the public, that each is exclusively the author of a republic, which the people find themselves possessed of by a kind of magic, or at least a slight of hand, and which nevertheless they are as fond of as if it were their own offspring.

To these main arguments are added a number of subordinate ones, with all the little accessories of time, place, and circumstance. The majority of the Convention, however, diffident of the people of this city, and apprehensive that they may take it into their heads to make another revolution, when they grow tired of the present state of things, have called (privately) for a guard from the different departments. This now forms the bone of contention. You will see in the gazettes the arguments pro and con. I own that I think it a false stroke in politics, though, as a peaceable citizen of Paris, and interested in the preservation of order, it is personally agreeable to me. On the ground of argument it is clearly a feature not republican, and *prima facie* implies that the Convention means to do things, which a majority of the capital would disapprove, and hence it follows again, that either the interests of the capital and the provinces are different, or else that the measures in contemplation are contrary to the inclinations of both. But it is not, I think, on the ground of theoretic argument, that such things are to be tried, but from an examination of probable consequences. A guard of this sort evidently draws a strong broad line of separation between the city and the Convention.

It gives of course many means for operating on the people to those, who are opposed to the Convention. It is among the things to be calculated on, that the guard after it has been here some time should catch the spirit of the city, be that what it may. In such case, instead of protectors they will find enemies in their guard ; but admitting that this should not happen, if the guard be feeble, it will be overawed ; if strong, those who can influence the guard, will command the Convention, who in this case will only have changed masters. If any little check should happen on the frontiers, it will be too unpopular to keep a considerable body of men for parade, who might be useful in camp ; and as soon as they go, the people will rise at once to resent the insult offered to them. It seems probable, therefore, that this guard will be among the reasons why the Convention may leave this city, and that would give a very serious shock, and in many ways. It is to be noted also, that when they shall take up a report on the form of government, the opposition will find vast resources in the opinions of the majority, let those be what they may. To these leading points, I might add a thousand little things, but you would be tired of such particularities.

With respect to the present temper of the people of this country, I am clearly of opinion, that the great decided effective majority is now for the republic. What may be the temper and opinion six months hence, no prudent sensible man would, I think, take upon him to declare. Much must depend on the form of government, which shall be presented by the Convention. If vigorous, it is very problematical whether the departments will adopt it, unless compelled by a sense of impending exterior danger. If feeble, it is (humanly speaking) impossible that it can control the effervescent temper of this people, and that appears sufficiently by the fate of the late constitution. Whether they will be able to strike out that happy mean, which secures all the liberty which circumstances admit of, combined with all the energy which the same circumstances require ; whether they can establish an authority which

does not exist, as a substitute (and always a dangerous substitute) for that respect, which cannot be restored after so much has been done to destroy it; whether, in crying down and even ridiculing religion, they will be able on the tottering and uncertain base of metaphysical philosophy to establish a solid edifice of morals; these are questions which time must solve. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO RUFUS KING.

Paris, October 23d, 1792.

Dear Sir,

Yours of the first of September reached me a few days ago. Accept my sincere thanks for the information it contains, which is precious and highly pleasing.

I might comment on what you say respecting a print, which censures every measure of government, but you will readily anticipate all which I might say on that subject. I cannot give you such desirable intelligence respecting the state of things here, as I might have done if the late revolution had not taken place, because I find my intercourse of necessity suspended, and until I have orders respecting the new government I am bound to preserve a neutrality of conduct, so that I cannot as heretofore peep behind the scenes. Add to this, that there is at present no very certain march anywhere, each feeling himself obliged to deviate according to circumstances from the course which he might wish. I will attempt, however, to give you an abbreviation of the late events, and in my letters to Mr Jefferson, which may perhaps be communicated to the Senate, and at any rate from the gazettes preceding and subsequent to the tenth of August, you will be able to fill up the outlines of the sketch.

The late revolution has for its remote cause that excess in the human temper, which drives men always to extremes, if

not checked and controlled. For its proximate cause it has the vices and defects of the late constitution, and particularly that an executive without powers was rendered responsible for events, and that a legislature composed of a single chamber of representatives was secured by every precaution, and under no control except some paper maxims and popular opinion. That the people, or rather the populace, a thing which thank God is unknown in America, flattered with the idea that they are omnipotent, and disappointed from necessity in the golden prospects originally held out to them, were under no restraint, except such as might be imposed by magistrates of their own choice. It resulted inevitably, that the executive must be in the power of the legislative, and this last at the mercy of such men as could influence the mob.

By reducing the royal authority below all reasonable measure, the constitution makers had created a moral impossibility, that the people should believe the King sincere in his acceptance, even if it had been possible that he should without regret have beheld himself reduced from the first place allotted to man, to a state so low as to be exposed to insult from the lowest. It was evident then, that the constitution could not last, and in the overturn three things might happen, viz. the establishment of despotism, the establishment of a good constitution, or the institution of a democracy. The first under an able and ambitious Prince was inevitable. The second was extremely difficult, not in itself, but because the chiefs of different parties all found themselves committed to different points and opinions. The last was only a natural continuation of the progress of men's minds, in a necessary succession of ideas from the bill of rights. The advocates for republican government therefore had an easy task, although both to themselves and others it appeared difficult.

From the moment that the second Assembly met, a plan was formed among several of the members and others, to overturn the constitution, which they had just sworn to observe, and establish a republic. This arose in part from the desire of pla-

cing themselves better than they could otherwise do, and in part from a conviction that the system could not last, and that they would have no share in the administration under such a pure monarchy. As they had a strong hold upon the lowest class of people, as the aristocratic and constitutional parties were at open war, as these last avowed openly their wish to amend, in other words, to change the constitution, which at the same time they assumed to venerate, it was not a difficult matter to assault a monarch, who adhered to that form which he could not be supposed to approve, and whose faults became daily more and more apparent.

Add to this, that the court was involved in a spirit of little paltry intrigue, unworthy of anything above the rank of footmen and chambermaids. Every one had his and her little project, and every little project had some abettors. Strong manly councils frightened the weak, alarmed the envious, and wounded the enervate minds of the lazy and luxurious. Such councils, therefore, if perchance any such appeared, were approved but not adopted, certainly not followed. The palace was always filled with people whose language, whose conduct, whose manner were so diametrically opposite to everything likeliberty, that it was easy to persuade the people that the court meant to destroy the constitution, by observing strictly the constitution. Some persons avowed the tactics, which from the moment of such avowal were no longer worth a doit. The King, whose integrity would never listen to anything like the violation of his oath, had nevertheless the weakness to permit those, who openly avowed unconstitutional sentiments, to approach his person, and enjoy his intimacy. The Queen was still more imprudent. The republicans (who had also their plan to destroy the constitution *by the constitution*) founded on the King's personal integrity their operation to destroy his reputation for integrity, and hold him out to the world as a traitor to the nation, which he was sworn to protect.

They in consequence seized every occasion to pass popular decrees, which were unconstitutional. If the King exercised

his veto, he was accused of wishing a counter revolution. If he sanctioned the decree, he was so far lost with those, who were injured by the decree, and of course became daily more and more unprotected. The success of his enemies was beyond their own expectation. His palace was assaulted. He took refuge with the Assembly, and is now a prisoner of state with his family.

But now the ideas of revolt, which had been fostered for his overthrow, are grown very troublesome to those, who have possessed themselves of the authority. It is not possible to say either to the people or to the sea, so far shalt thou go and no farther; and we shall have, I think, some sharp struggles which will make many men repent of what they have done, when they find with Macbeth, that they have but taught bloody instructions, which return to plague the inventor.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

Paris, October 24th, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

I have received yours of the twenty-second of June, and am in the hourly hope to hear farther from you. I need not tell you that it will give me pleasure. Enclosed you will find the copy of a letter, which I wrote to Mr Jefferson on the 7th of November, 1791. This, with some other communications at the same epoch, he never acknowledged. I know not why, but I think the paper enclosed in that letter will be agreeable to you, though not very amusing.

It would seem that your friend *Scipio* is not much attached to *Paulus*, at least if I may judge from some things which I see. However, there is a great chasm in my newspapers, which breaks the thread of my conjectures, as well as of my information; for I have little, I might almost say, none of the latter but from the gazettes; of course I know what passes about two

months after everybody else. Tell me, I pray you, how *Scævola* stands affected between the parties just named. I think he never had a very high opinion of the first mentioned, but he was attached to *Tarquin* immeasurably, and that, with some local circumstances, may have formed a stronger chain than I should otherwise suppose.

You will have seen that the late constitution of this country has overset ; a natural accident to a thing, which was all sail and no ballast. I desire much, very much, to know the state of opinions with you on that subject. Some gentlemen, who considered it as the acme of human wisdom, must, I suppose, find out causes which persons on the spot never dreamt of. But in seeking or inventing these causes, what will be their opinion of present powers, what the [conduct they wish to pursue? These are to me important questions. *Brutus* will doubtless triumph, but I wish to feel the pulse of opinion with you, or rather to know beforehand how it is like to beat. There are pros and cons, whose action I cannot estimate. The flight of Monsieur de Lafayette, the murder of the Duke de la Rochefoucault and others, with many similar circumstances, have, I know, affected the ideas of some. But what will be the republican sense as to the new republic? Will it be taken for granted, that Louis the Sixteenth was guilty of all possible crimes, and particularly of the enormous one of not suffering his throat to be cut, which was certainly a nefarious plot against the people, and a manifest violation of the bill of rights? *Paulus*, who is no enemy to Kings, will not believe that they are all tigers; but I am not certain that, if he were here, he would not consider them as monkeys.

However, we are done with them in France, at least for the present. There are two parties here. The one consists of about half a dozen, and the other of fifteen or twenty, who are at dagger's drawing. Each claims the merit of having made the young republic. My public letters and the gazettes will bring you acquainted with things here, as fully as I can in any

way communicate them. It is not worth while to detail the characters of those now on the stage, because they must soon give place to others. Adieu.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO WILLIAM CARMICHAEL.

Paris, November 5th, 1792.

My Dear Carmichael,

I have received your letters of the twenty-ninth of August, and fifteenth of October. I feel perfectly your situation, and have frequently lamented that you had not powers equal to the position in which you are placed. It would seem that we know not yet the value of the moment, and I fear that we shall find to our cost that *post est opportunitas calva*. When Mr Short was here, he talked of going to Madrid, but, from what cause I know not, appeared to me indecisive, and apprehensive, to a degree which was astonishing. Whether this arises from nature, or from long habits of ease in this city, I know not.

I shall forward by Colonel Smith to Mr Pinckney, the intelligence you sent me for him. I shall tell him at the same time that, in my opinion, the principal object in contemplation is France, and that the United States are only affected by a side wind. However, that is of little importance, since a side wind may do as much mischief to our ship as any other.

As to the state of things here, I can give you no very satisfactory or flattering accounts. True it is that the French arms are crowned with great success. Towns fall before them without a blow, and the declaration of rights produces an effect equal at least to the trumpets of Joshua; but as on the one hand I never questioned the force of France if united, and her natural enthusiasm warmed by the ardor of newborn freedom, so on the other I was always apprehensive, that they would be deficient in that cool reflection, which appears need-

ful to consolidate a free government. We read in the history of man, as it is developed in the great book of nature, that empires do by no means depend on their success in arms, but on their civil, religious, and political constitutions, and that in the framing of these it is a useless question what kinds are best in themselves. The more so, as good and bad here below, but especially in that which we now contemplate, are mere relative terms. The true object of a great statesman is to give to any particular nation the kind of laws, which is suitable to them, and the best constitution which they are capable of. Now by as much as it is an easy thing, and within the compass of every schoolboy, to deal in generals and abstractions, pursuing demonstrations which in moral subjects are frequently least exact when they appear to be most evident, by so much is it of high and almost insurmountable difficulty, to descend into the nice estimates of manners, habits, and sentiments, and, amidst the discord of loud and contradictory passions and interests, to discover the means of establishing a harmonious system, where each part has the needful relation to every other, and to the great whole.

These observations are, I know, familiar to you, and to every other sensible man, who has had much experience in human affairs; but they are heathen Greek, or, if you will, flat nonsense, when addressed to those new fledged statesmen, who are always positive and peremptory in proportion to their ignorance of politics. But even if we should suppose, that by miracle the men of a day should be imbued with the important truths, which it is necessary to the peace and happiness of society that its rulers should be acquainted with, still we are a great, and I might say, an immense distance from the object. Before the people will assent to the form of government, which in hypothesis shall be supposed the most fitting for them, they must be convinced of the fitness. No easy task, believe me; even if man were a reasonable creature, but he is not. He is a creature of sense, and governed invariably by his feelings. Now you can easily make him feel, that in point

of right he is equal to every other man. Vanity may even whisper to him that he is so in point of talent, and if vanity were remiss, the prompter flattery is at hand. But the more he feels his equality of rights and talents, the more must he feel his inequality in point of possessions. Where these are wanting, he has rights which he cannot exercise, talents which he cannot employ, desires which he cannot gratify, and, in consequence, resentments which he cannot allay.

Now the severe law of property is, that in any well settled country a few must soon possess all, and the majority, the great majority, nothing. Between that economy, which constitutes the tyranny of the rich, and that misery which enslaves the poor, let the form of government be what it may, there is a constant struggle which forms great men, and great men are generally ambitious men. Their equals in property are as much enslaved by their pleasures, as the poorer kinds, can possibly be by their wants. In such a state of things, where the constitution is not balanced in its structure, and supported by strong props of private interest, it must be overturned. I quit these investigations to tell you, that all here is in a state of uncertainty. Time will disclose the events with which he is charged in their due season. Some of them I think will be of sable hue. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS PINCKNEY.

Paris, December 3d, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

I have received yours of the ninth, and will show to the bearer, Mr Scott, every attention which my time and affairs will permit.

The Swedish Minister, whom you speak of, is not yet arrived, neither do I expect one. The former Ambassador did indeed announce to his family, the intention to come hither

in his way to Switzerland, in order to settle some private affairs. An important negotiation would not be committed to him, I think.

Success, as you will see, continues to crown the French arms, but it is not our trade to judge from success. We must observe the Civil, Moral, Religious and Political Institutions. These have a steady and lasting effect, and these only. You will soon learn that the patriots, hitherto adored, were but little worthy of the incense they received. The enemies of those, who now reign, treat them as they did their predecessors, and as their successors will be treated.

Since I have been in this country, I have seen the worship of many idols, and but little of the true God. I have seen many of those idols broken, and some of them beaten to dust. I have seen the late constitution, in one short year, admired as a stupendous monument of human wisdom, and ridiculed as an egregious production of folly and vice. I wish much, very much, the happiness of this inconstant people. I love them, I feel grateful for their efforts in our cause, and I consider the establishment of a good constitution here as the principal means, under Divine Providence, of extending the blessings of freedom to the many millions of my fellow men, who groan in bondage on the continent of Europe. But I do not greatly indulge the flattering illusions of hope, because I do not yet perceive that reformation of morals, without which liberty is but an empty sound. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, December 21st, 1792.

Dear Sir,

I have received your favors of the twelfth of July, and fifteenth of October.* The last reached me yesterday, by ex-

* See Jefferson's Writings, Vol. iii. p. 191.

press from Bordeaux. I am astonished to find, that so late as the middle of October you had received but one of my letters. I had taken every precaution against miscarriages, but there is no answering for the negligence of those one is obliged to employ in the posts.

When I mentioned supplies to St Domingo, I certainly meant that such supplies should be purchased by French agents in the United States, and that the money should be advanced by us in diminution of our debt, upon such terms as that the United States should not lose in the mode of payment, but the contrary, besides the advantage of expending such large sums in the purchase of objects, the growth, produce, and manufacture of our country, and of its industrious inhabitants. As to specific supplies, I had declared in pointed terms, that the American government would by no means enter into stipulations of any kind, with relation thereto. I am happy to find that, on this occasion, my sentiments have so fully coincided with yours.

It gives me so great relief to be informed, that until further orders the payments are suspended. You will have seen that on this point I have been hard run, and I do assure you that if fear, or interest, would have induced me to swerve from the line of duty, there were not wanting sufficient motives. But it is not needful to relate such particulars, and you may rely that I shall not communicate your present instruction respecting our debt, unless I shall be of opinion that it will become serviceable to the honor or interest of the United States.

I see with concern that the Indian war is like to continue. This war prevents the investments of European money in the purchase of our waste lands, and I have already expressed to you my conviction, that this species of investiture would be as salutary, as the engrossing of our domestic debt is pernicious. The distressed state of things here induces many to turn their attention towards us, and consequently occasions numerous applications to me. I endeavor, as far as propriety will admit, to lead people to a preference of American lands, but I am sorry

to observe that the disposition to invest in our funds is predominant, and that we shall thereby become tributary to those who obtain, below its value, a share of those funds. I think it my duty to mention this to you, to the end that if any measures can be devised to enhance the value with you, and thereby lessen the negotiations, or at least obtain thereon the competent value, such measures may be adopted.

Although I step very much out of my sphere for the purpose, I feel myself bound also to mention, respecting this Indian war, some ideas which have formerly suggested themselves to me, and which the circumstances of the present moment seem to favor in a peculiar manner. I cannot but think, that it would be well to build a fleet on Lake Erie, having for that purpose established a strong post at Presque Isle, which is, I believe, the only good harbor on the south side of that Lake, and to send also a *Flotille* from Oswego, with flour and salt provisions, to be transported by way of Niagara. As to this last measure, if not obstructed by the British, it would considerably lessen the expense, and if opposed, would terminate that situation of demi-hostility, which has but too much existed with them. If a body of fifteen hundred men were sent with all the needful stores by water, in good vessels, they might establish a strong post near the Miami Towns, and carry on from thence a war of devastation, which would force the savages to abandon the country, and that is, I believe, the only effectual means of obtaining peace with them.

You will find enclosed herewith my letters of the twenty-seventh of September, and twenty-third of October. I have had no good opportunity since the latter of those dates. If, indeed, America had been at the distance of only fifty leagues, I should have given you every two or three days the state of men and things; but placed as we are, both morally and physically in respect to this country, I should only have wearied you by the little uninteresting histories of persons and projects, whose existence will soon be consigned to an endless oblivion. It has however appeared to me important to obtain, as nearly as

may be, a view of the greater events which may probably arise, because the conduct of the United States will, I presume, be squared rather to that state of things, which you may conceive likely to be established, than to the fluctuating chances of an hour which passes away.

I shall resume, then, my account of things where I last left it, viz. in the projected invasion of Flanders; and first, it may be proper to cast an eye on the structure and consistence of the French armies. The leading feature here is an artillery, which is, beyond all controversy, the best in Europe, and likely to continue so from two causes. First, that the Frenchman is by nature a better artillerist than almost any other man, it being in his temper, and, and if I may say so, in his blood and marrow to act suddenly and without deliberation. Hence he becomes very dexterous in those things, which are to be performed at a single motion, and by a single glance, but rarely acquires a knowledge of any business which requires constant, close, and undissipated attention. Secondly, the excellence of the French artillery depends upon the great care and culture of their natural disposition. The able men, who have formerly been at the head of their military affairs, had the merit of knowing the character they had to do with, and therefore (quitting what appeared unattainable in the military art) sought perfection there, where Frenchmen could find it. They despaired of forming solid columns of infantry, moving with the exact precision of German discipline. It happens, therefore, that the present French army differs less from what the French armies have been heretofore, than would easily have been supposed. The same enthusiasm of enterprise, the same contempt of danger, the same impetuosity of valor, and the same impatience of control, still mark the nation which inhabits the country that was once ancient Gaul.

They have, as heretofore, overrun Flanders, made impression on Germany, and occupied Savoy. Dumouriez, in his Flemish expedition, combined the arts of a politician with the bravery of an experienced soldier. You know that the inhab-

itants of the Low Countries were indisposed to the domination of the House of Austria, particularly since the attempts of Joseph the Second to weaken the influence of the priesthood. During the latter part of his reign, there had sprung up three parties, viz. the *Bigots*, who wanted a kind of theocracy, to be exercised by the priesthood; The *Nobility* and substantial burghers, who wished to establish a free and well organized constitution; and the *French party*, or those who were desirous of levelling the nobles; and above all, the church, which possesses as you know the greatest part of the Flemish territory.

On the return of imperial authority, after the revolt under Vandernoot and Van Eupen, the second party above mentioned, naturally enough fell in with the government, as they had already experienced no little tyranny from the priests, and saw much danger in the prevalence of French ideas. They stickled however, for a confirmation of ancient chartered rights, and the disputes on that chapter were still open. They hoped that the war, whose avowed object on the part of France was to drive out the House of Austria, would induce the Emperor to cede the points in controversy. The cabinet of Vienna, on the other hand, believing in a certain victory over the French government, rather wished, than feared revolt; and when the face of affairs had materially changed, it was too late to retract, since the concession of weakness, neither conciliates affection nor commands respect.

The agents of the different parties, who had preserved a connexion more or less direct with Dumouriez, were urgent with him to go into Flanders, as soon as the Prussian army began to retreat, and he adroitly flattered each with the hope of favoring its particular views. This was done at the expense of a little lying, which does not cost him much. By these means the crafty priests were as completely duped as their adversaries, and more so.

After the battle of Jemappe when he had taken possession of Mons, he took care to proscribe the adherents to the Emperor, which left but two parties to deal with; and although the

ecclesiastics began to perceive their danger, it was now too late, and they were obliged to pretend an attachment which they did not feel, and which served his temporary purpose as effectually as if it had been sincere. But he had too much sense not to know, that measures hostile to the real interests of the country could only be carried into effect by those, who have no common interest with the country, the populace of the large towns, who, having some chance to gain by turning all things topsy turvy, and who being happily secure against the possibility of loss because they have nothing to lose, are always the ready instruments of mischief to those, who can bring themselves to use them for destructive purposes. He, therefore, published a proclamation, which may in a few words be transmitted into an order to be free, according to his ideas of freedom, on pain of military execution. As a military man, he had almost insured success by advancing with three armies, the last of which was equal to all the force the enemy could muster, and the centre, which he commanded, was double that spread over the different parts of that level country. At the affair of Jemappe, he commanded eighty-six thousand men, although they were not all in action, because eighty thousand cannot act together on only two sides of eighteen thousand. By the bye, this affair, notwithstanding the accounts published, was decided by the immense train of heavy artillery which the French employed, and the proof is in the retreat of the Austrians, who carried off their cannon, a thing impossible, had the lines been taken, as was said, by assault; but the truth is, that the assault was given after the retreat was begun, and the Hungarian Grenadiers, who brought up the rear, were in course cut to pieces.

Dumouriez, as soon as he had got fairly in possession of Brussels, began to develope his particular plans. It was never his intention to continue, if he could avoid it, in the capacity of a servile agent to the Executive Council; but they also were aware of his views; hence the course of his successes naturally tended to a breach between them. There were additional reasons on each side, both of safety and advan-

tage, too tedious to enumerate, because it is sufficient to state those sentiments which may govern events, without developing all the sources from which they originate. The Council gave orders for opening the Scheldt, with design to captivate by that measure, the attention of the people of Brabant, and, lessening his influence, increase their own. He struggled against that measure but in vain. Having, however, made the step, he formed the farther plan of attacking the Dutch, who were by no means prepared to receive him; and the party in that country, which calls itself *Patriotic*, and which others would be very apt to term *Aristocratic*, immediately opened an intelligence with him.

The governing powers here, in the midst of all these plans, (and intoxicated by success, perhaps,) declared themselves the allies of all those, who would revolt against established authority, and the enemies of all those who would not revolt. They determined that everybody should be free, French fashion, *and should pay the expense which might attend the making of them free*. This last address to the purse was not, perhaps, well calculated for the taste either of the Hollanders or Flemings; but the latter must for the present submit to whatever impositions may be laid on them, being in the power of this country.

Shortly after the plan was laid for invading Holland, of which the above mentioned decree was a partial execution, two circumstances arose which changed the measures of the Council. The French army began to lessen very much; but this is a subject which I must treat separately; and therefore barely mention it in this place. The other circumstance was, that the ministers and agents they had employed in London assured them, that, although the declaration respecting the Scheldt had occasioned much alarm, and irritated at the same time the British cabinet, yet they might avoid hostilities, if they did not actually invade the Dutch territory. They, in consequence, gave orders to Dumouriez to abandon his design upon the Netherlands, and turn his arms to another quarter.

These he refused to obey ; but being reiterated, and things here being a little different from what he hoped, he has within these few days submitted ; but I shall come to this part of the history presently ; and here I will conclude as to Holland, by adding that the agents of the patriotic party press the government hard to attack their native country immediately, but are told that the time is not favorable, that they will certainly march that way by and bye, but that at present *they have not sufficient force nor supplies*.

You will observe, that M. Lebrun* declares to the Assembly, that they are guiltless of any design against Holland, and that England cannot justly complain on that score. I presume, however, that the British ministry are exactly informed of the contrary ; but be that as it may, you may rely on what I relate to you. In respect to the Flemish, before I leave them, I must tell you that their ancient hatred to the French is all revived, and is, if possible, more violent than ever. Several reasons for this appear from what I have already said ; but there is one cause, affecting equally all the neighbors of France, and which it may be well in this place to mention. It would seem, at first sight, somewhat strange, that the people in the world, the most amiable at home, should be the most disagreeable abroad ; but this is strictly true. The morals, or rather the want of morals, in this country, places every one at his ease. He may be virtuous if he pleases, but there is no necessity either to be, or to appear so, consequently, both good men, and bad men, can enjoy the society of Paris ; but when the French go abroad, they desire to introduce among other people the same free and easy principles, which do by no means suit the taste of those, who consider a chaste and orderly deportment essential to the peace and happiness of civil society.

The open contempt of religion, also, cannot but be offensive to all sober minded men ; add to this, a style of conversation,

* Minister of Foreign Affairs,

which runs on the insulting comparison between their own usages, and those of the people with whom they live. In this they naturally, and I believe justly, give a preference to their own, but this preference becomes irksome to others, especially, if, in the expression of it, there should be mingled some little contempt, which is not uncommon. The French emigrants had wearied out all those countries, which for two years past they have infested, and had accumulated on their own heads the antipathies, which had been previously extended to all their countrymen. Nay, from this hatred to them sprang up a kind of left-handed love for the Jacobins, it being natural to like those who war on the persons whom we dislike. But no sooner do the French armies enter into a country, than the scene changes. The emigrants do not indeed find favor, but the original sentiments of the people return in regard to the French nation. These sentiments are universally unfavorable, as I observed (with sorrow and surprise) in a journey I made two years ago through Flanders, and a part of Germany, viz. that which is the seat of the war.

The irruption into Germany, under Custine, was attended with the same rapid success as that of Dumouriez, into the Low Countries. Mayence was surrendered, rather to the Assignats, than to the arms of France, it is believed. Frankfort naturally fell, as being a neutral city. Contributions were raised in both, and you will see with astonishment, that the Deputies sent from Frankfort, to solicit the remittance of her contribution, were made prisoners here, when their city was retaken by the Prussian and Hessian forces. This recapture was attended with strong circumstances to show that hatred of the French, which I have above mentioned. Custine's advance into Germany was certainly hazarded beyond the rules of prudence, and it will be well if he escapes with no further loss, than what he has already suffered. His present situation is certainly critical, since the Council have thought proper to order on Dumouriez to his relief. And here, by the way, it will be well to remind you, that the distance from Valenci-

ennes to Liège is about one half the distance from Liège to Mayence, and that the former is a level, open country, the latter a country of defiles, at least for a considerable part of the distance. Add to this, the season, which is already severe in that quarter, and must, in all human probability, become more so every day, and you will easily see why Dumouriez in agreeing, at last, to obey his orders, has declared that he will by no means be responsible for the success. You will recollect, also, the diminution of the French armies, which it is proper now to state more particularly.

The alarm spread through France after the affair of the tenth of August; the call to defend their country, a call which must ever be efficacious so long as men are endued with the feelings of men; the boiling spirit of the nation, and the strenuous exertions of those against whom the Duke of Brunswick had denounced an inexpiable war, had called into the field six hundred thousand men. Presently, France renewed the appearance of a nation of warriors, overflowing on every side, and bearing down with an irresistible impetuosity every obstacle. Her enemies, who had never brought against her, in the whole, above one hundred and fifty thousand, and who were much reduced by sickness and fatigue, found themselves obliged to retire, and had no resource but to impede a progress which they could not prevent. This government, on the other hand, sensible that the next campaign would press them hard, and feeling, in spite of delusive appearances, that a paper system of finance must at length sink under the enormous weight of their expenses, thought it wise to push to the utmost their successes, and were little solicitous about a loss of men, which they could supply more easily than their enemies.

But there is, to the physical powers of man, a narrower bound than to his moral conceptions. Excessive fatigue, want of necessaries, and bad accommodations, have carried many to the grave. Not a few have fallen in action. At the present moment, there are in the different military hospitals seventy-

five thousand sick beds, and at Liège their hospital stores are so greatly deficient, that the inhabitants have been compelled to furnish all their spare beds and mattresses, notwithstanding which, many of the sick soldiers lie on the straw. The extent of country which they occupy, and the projected changes in government, contrary to the wish of the majority of the people, render it necessary to keep up garrisons, beyond those which are placed on the communications.

A great proportion of the volunteers, who had turned out at first to defend their country, who had afterwards been prompted by a national spirit and temper to march into the neighboring states, and who, from the same spirit and temper, pursued as long as their limbs would support them, sinking at last under fatigue, have stopped, and from that moment it is in their nature to return, such of them at least as are able; of consequence, the troops in condition to act are, comparatively speaking, but a handful, although still numerous.

You will see by the gazettes, that the armies of France have frequently been straitened for subsistence, and surely this is not to be wondered at. Lorraine is so completely eaten up, that, as I am credibly informed, above one hundred thousand of its inhabitants had left it before the present month, for want of food. A contagious dysentery had swept off numbers in that quarter. You know the country from Aix La Chapelle to Coblenz, and that having been the théâtre of war almost since the first of August, it will be impossible to find anything in it, and that confined by the Ardennes on one side, and the Rhine on the other, nothing can be brought to it but by a land transportation of at least fifty leagues. I fear that even, had Dumouriez quartered his troops as he intended in and about Liège, it would have been extremely difficult to have collected magazines, especially for his cavalry. What must it be, when he gets to the neighborhood of Bonn. Beurnonville is, you will see, pushing with an army of thirty thousand men towards Coblenz, by the way of Trèves. A rugged country of fastnesses, defended by the winter, and fifteen thousand

Austrian troops are opposed to him. Consequently his progress is slow, and by and bye his convoys will be exposed to parties from the garrison of Luxembourg. Thus you see, Sir, that France is warring at present against nature herself, as it were, and sanguine men hope for success. If it be obtained, the enemy will open the next campaign under manifest disadvantages. But we must not yet enter into that consideration.

You will have seen that the Jacobin club is as much at war with the present government, as it was with the preceding. Victory or death, is the word with both parties. Hitherto the majority of the Convention have had rather the advantage, although they frequently decree what they do not wish. The ministers, possessing vastly more patronage than any monarch since Louis the Fourteenth, secured by that means the influence of the majority, their friends and the Jacobins, who, backed by the Parisian populace, have been several times within an inch of ruin. Luckily for them, their adversaries are many of them timid, while the Jacobin leaders are daring and determined.

It is now some time since the Jacobins despatched Bonne-Carrère to make overtures to Dumouriez, whose quarrel with the Council was then just breaking out. It was then understood, that if Dumouriez threw up his commission in disgust, his army would presently retreat back to Valenciennes; and this it was supposed would justify a *coup de main* in this city, and extend the influence of it through all France. Ever since this embassy of Bonne-Carrère, things have been ripening fast on both sides. At present there is a schism in the ministry, and Pache, the Minister of War, throws his weight into the scale of opposition. Dumouriez has, I am told, acceded, notwithstanding the adulations and concessions of the other party, and the coalition now nearly balance their opponents.

A late circumstance brought forward a show of forces, and though it is rather anticipating a different subject, I must state it here. The *Brissotines*, finding themselves hard pushed towards the killing of the King, and apprehensive, not with-

out reason, that this might be a signal for their own destruction, determined on a measure not a little hazardous, but decisive. This was the expulsion of the Bourbons, a blow originally levelled at the Duke of Orleans. The motion was carried, but the Convention have been obliged to suspend the decree, and that is, I think, equivalent to a repeal. The suspension evidently was pronounced under the influence of the Tribunes. Many members have talked of leaving Paris, but the same fear, which controls them while in this city, will prevent them from quitting it. At least, such is my opinion.

I come now to the trial of the King, and the circumstances connected with it. To a person less intimately acquainted than you are with the history of human affairs, it would seem strange that the mildest monarch who ever filled the French throne, one who is precipitated from it precisely because he would not adopt the harsh measures of his predecessors, a man whom none could charge with a criminal or cruel act, should be prosecuted as one of the most nefarious tyrants, that ever disgraced the annals of human nature. That he, Louis the Sixteenth, should be prosecuted even to death. Yet such is the fact. I think it highly probable that he may suffer, and that for the following causes. The majority of the Assembly found it necessary to raise, against this unhappy Prince, the national odium, in order to justify the dethroning him (which, after what he had suffered, appeared to be necessary even to their safety) and to induce the ready adoption of a republican form of Government. Being in possession of his papers, and those of his servants, it was easy, if they would permit themselves to extract, to comment, to suppress, and to mutilate, it was *very* easy to create such opinions as they might think proper. The rage which has been excited was terrible; and, although it begins to subside, the Convention are still in great straits; fearing to acquit, fearing to condemn, and yet urged to destroy their captive Monarch.

The violent party are clamorous against him, for reasons which I will presently state. The Monarchic and Aristocratic

parties wish his death, in the belief that such catastrophe would shock the national feelings, awaken their hereditary attachments, and turn into the channels of loyalty the impetuous tide of opinion. Thus, he has become the common object of hatred to all parties, because he has never been the decided patron of any one. If he is saved, it will be by the justice of his cause, which will have some little effect, and by the pity which is universally felt, though none dare express it openly, for the very harsh treatment which he has endured.

I come now to the motives of the violent party. You will see that Louvet, whose pamphlet, with many others, I send you, has charged on this party the design to restore royalty in the person of the Duke of Orleans. This man's character and conduct give but too much room to suspect him of criminal intentions. In general, I doubt the public virtue of a profligate, and cannot help suspecting appearances put on by such persons. I have besides many particular circumstances, which lead me to believe that he has, from the beginning, played a deep and doubtful game; but I believe also, that on the present occasion, as on some preceding, he is the dupe. Shortly after the tenth of August, I had information on which you may rely, that the plan of Danton was to obtain the resignation of the King, and get himself appointed chief of a council of regency, composed of his creatures, during the minority of the Dauphin. This idea has never, I believe, been wholly abandoned. The *Cordeliers*, (or privy council, which directs the Jacobin movements,) know well the danger of interverting the order of succession. They know how to appreciate the fluctuating opinions of their countrymen, and though they are very willing to employ the Duke of Orleans in their work, I am much mistaken, if they will consent to elevate him to the throne. So that, for his share of the guilt, he may probably be rewarded with the shame of it, and the mortifying reflection that after all the conflicts of his political warfare, he has gained no victory but over his own conscience.

It is worthy of remark, that, although the Convention has

been now near four months in session, no plan of a constitution is yet produced. Nevertheless, the special authority committed to them by the people, and the only authority, perhaps, which cannot be contested, was to prepare such a plan.

I shall now, Sir, make a few reflections on the state of Foreign powers. The adoption of Savoy, as an additional department, forms *one* ground on which the adversaries of this country contend, that their protestations against conquest were only delusive. But the declaration, that they would erect the standard of liberty everywhere, forms the great cause with some, and pretext with others, for endeavoring to crush the Republic.

On the conduct likely to be pursued by Great Britain, although that of Holland stands in close connexion, I shall not permit myself to hazard much conjecture, because Mr Pinckney will, I am persuaded, keep you fully informed, and because the accounts which Mr Short has given you will throw light on the same subject. I have already troubled you with some ideas respecting the interior state of Great Britain, and I add here my opinion, that sooner or later they must go into the war. Mr Hammond's manœuvres will give you some good clue, I think, and perhaps hostile decisions at St James's may produce pacific dispositions among the Indian tribes. I am sure I need not add that it would be well to make the Indians, as the price of peace, declare who set them on. Perhaps in resentment of that conduct which may be pursued, they may take it in their heads to make Mr Simcoe a visit.

The Elector of Hanover, as member of the German Empire, *must* come into the field; and from *inclination* and *interest*, he will do so, I think, fully. The contingent of Saxony will be sent forward with speed, and notwithstanding the debauched temper of the Elector of Bavaria, as his dominions in the Palatinate are exposed, as well as his Dutchy of Juliers, he must exert himself. A strong squadron of British men of war would rouse all Italy. And without them, the French arms may make considerable progress in that fertile, feeble country.

As to Spain, I think the court is too corrupt, and too profligate, to make any considerable efforts. Bankrupt, almost, in full peace, with the mines of Mexico and Peru at their disposal, what would a war produce? The chances are, that France will make an inroad, rather than suffer one in that quarter. Russia menaces, but the state of her finances, and the great distance, must make her efforts fall short of her wishes. Every art is used on each side to influence the Turk, and I own to you, that I rather apprehend that England and the Imperial Courts combined will prove successful, especially as Monsieur de Choiseul Gouffier is now openly active there on the part of the emigrant Princes. Should his Highness interfere, he will draw after him all the Barbary powers; and the want of the grain usually drawn from them, will not be the least evil that will thereby fall upon the Provinces bordering on the Mediterranean sea.

Austria and Prussia are making their utmost efforts, and the Prince of Hesse, who (strange as it may seem) is adored by his subjects, will second those efforts to the utmost of his ability.

Such, my dear Sir, is the foreign storm lowering over this country, in which you will see, that my predictions respecting corn, have been hitherto exactly verified. How they are to obtain supplies from abroad, in the face of the maritime powers, I own myself at a loss to conjecture. It is nevertheless in this awful moment, and immediately after expediting the orders to recruit their army to six hundred thousand effectives, in order to sustain the land war, that they affect to wish Britain would declare against them, and actually menace, as you see, the government with an appeal to the nation. There are cases in which events must decide on the quality of actions, which are bold or rash, according to the success.

The circumstances of a war with Britain becomes important to us in more cases than one. The question respecting the guarantee of American possessions may perhaps be agitated, especially if France should attempt to defend her islands. There will doubtless be many in the United States, who will

contend that the treaty made with the King is at least suspended, if not abrogated, by the abrogation of his office and authority. Without entering into the numerous arguments on this subject, some of them forcible, and all of them plausible, I will only pray your indulgence while I express my wish that all our treaties, however onerous, may be strictly fulfilled according to their true intent and meaning. The honest nation is that, which, like the honest man,

‘Hath to its plighted faith and vow forever firmly stood,
And though its promise to its loss, yet makes that promise good.’

I feel, nevertheless, the full force of your observation, that until the nation shall have adopted some regular form of government, we may not know in what manner, or to what person, our obligations are to be acquitted.

Before I close this too long letter, excuse me for mentioning that a statue of General Washington, ordered by the State of Virginia, is finished, and for requesting to know to what place it is to be forwarded, and when. I have the honor to be,

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

Paris, December 24th, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

I wrote to you on the twenty-fourth of October, and have not since received any of your letters. In that I acknowledged yours of the 22d of June. You will have seen from the public prints the wonderful success of the French arms, arising from the following causes. 1. That the enemy, deceived by the emigrants, counted too lightly on the opposition he was to meet with. 2. That from like misinformation, instead of attacking on the northern frontier, backed by the resources of Flanders, and those which the ocean would supply, they came across the Ardennes to that part of Champaign, nicknamed the *lousy*, from its barrenness and misery. 3. That in this ex-

pedition, where the difficulty of the roads, transportation and communication was the greatest they expected, it so happened that the season, usually dry and fair, (when those bad roads are at the best) was one continued rain for two months, so that at length they were nearly stuck fast, and had as much as they could do to drag back their cannon, &c. through the mud. Lastly, that France brought into the field, and has kept up until very lately, the immense number of six hundred thousand troops. This has been done at an average expense of about five millions sterling per month beyond their resources, and yet they have ordered a like army for the next campaign, and talk boldly of meeting Great Britain also upon her element. What say you to that, Monsieur le Financier? But I will tell you in your ear, that in spite of that blustering, they will do much to avoid a war with Great Britain, *if the people will let them*, but the truth is, that the populace of Paris influence in a great degree the public councils. I think they will have quite as many men as they can maintain; but what that may amount to is hard to determine.

The ministers here are most extraordinary people. They make nothing of difficulties, as you shall judge by a single trait of M. Pache, the minister at War. He had sent Beurnonville to occupy the Moselle river down to Coblenz, taking Trèves and other places in his way. Now this way lies through a very difficult mountainous country, in which the snow is very deep, therefore Beurnonville, having got a little neck of land between the Saar and the Moselle, puts his troops into winter quarters, pleading their nakedness as an excuse. The minister has sent him a brace of commissioners, who have power to *impress* in the neighborhood whatever may be needful for the troops, and then (their wants supplied) summon him to obey his orders. I have given to Mr Jefferson a pretty full account of the state of things, so that if you see that account, which I take it is of course, you may measure by the standard now given you all other affairs.

If I may venture to judge from appearances, there is now in

the wind a storm not unlike that of the second of September. Whether it will burst or blow over, it is impossible to determine.

It has occurred to me, that I never yet assigned a reason why the completion of payment of six million livres, which at Mr Short's request I had stipulated for with the government lately abolished, appeared to me desirable. In effect, I left this as I do many other things to the sense of the *gentle* reader, but as readers are sometimes *ungentle*, it is not amiss to communicate that reason to a friend. I saw that the new government would be hungry, and would urge us for money in the double view of obtaining an acknowledgment of them, as well as of supplying *their* wants. It was therefore, I thought, right to take a position where we might say *there is nothing due*. This would leave open a question, which it would be very delicate to answer either way, as things *appeared* then, and as they *are* now that *appearances* have changed. You will have seen the manœuvres to force me in that intrenchment; but at last, like *your friend* General Lee, I was quite at the worst for a retrograde manœuvre.

But I concluded that supplies of money to support the colony of St Domingo would, *in all events*, have been considered as a *good and effectual payment on our part*, and, had my offer of recommending such supplies been accepted, I would on *that ground* have proposed the measure, which, *anticipating the next instalments*, would have still kept open the main point as long as you should think proper. And thus my *apparent retreat* was in effect a mode of *more permanent defence*, and this is more, I believe, than poor Lee could say for himself. I am truly yours, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, December 28th, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

I did myself the honor to write to you on the twenty-third of October. Since that date the exterior affairs of this country have put on a more steady appearance. My letter of the twenty-first instant to Mr Jefferson will communicate my view of things, to which I could add but little at this day.

I have not mentioned to him the appointment of M. Genet, as Minister to the United States. In fact, this appointment has never been announced to me. Perhaps the Ministry think it is a trait of republicanism to omit those forms, which were anciently used to express good will. In the letter, which is addressed to you, is a strain of adulation, which your good sense will easily expound. Let it be compared with M. Lebrun's letter to me of the 30th of August. The fact is, that they begin to open their eyes to their true situation; and besides they wish to bring forward, into act, our guarantee of their islands, if the war with Britain should actually take place.

As to that war, I am told that the British ultimatum is as follows. France shall deliver the royal family to such reigning branch of the Bourbons as the King may choose, and shall recall her troops from the countries they now occupy. In this event, Britain will send hither a Minister, and acknowledge the republic, and mediate a peace with the Emperor and King of Prussia. I have several reasons to believe, that this information is not far from the truth, and that if the Ministers felt themselves at liberty to act, they would agree to the terms. These terms are, it is said, consequential to the sentiments delivered by opposition in the British Parliament; who are, as you will see become quite insignificant, but it was thought best to place them in a necessity of supporting the measures of administration.

I consider these terms, or something very like them, in a different point of view. If the French retire, and consequently eat up again their high toned declarations in favor of the people, and denunciations against Kings, they will, at the next attempt, find as many enemies as there are men in the neighboring countries, and of course the *mediator* will prescribe such terms as he may think proper. Secondly, as it is almost evident that the republic must be torn to pieces by contending factions, even without any foreign interference, her population, wealth, and resources, above all her Marine, must dwindle away; and as much of her intelligence and industry, with the greater part of her money capital, must on this hypothesis seek the protection of law and government on the other side of the channel, her rival will increase both in positive and relative power. Thirdly, an exiled monarch on the other side of the Pyrenees, (for it is at Madrid that he would probably take refuge,) would enable Britain at any moment to distract the French affairs, and involve the republic in a war with Spain. Lastly, it seems an almost necessary conclusion, that if France in some years of convulsive misery should escape dismemberment, she would sink under severe and single despotism, and when relieved therefrom by the King, or his descendants, or relations, she would be in a state of wretchedness for at least one generation.

I understand that the French, in the consciousness that their principles have ruined their colonies, are willing to pay them as the price of peace; but on the other hand Mr Pitt has, I am told, refused the offers which the colonists have made to him, partly because he does not wish to excite alarm, and partly because the only useful part of the colonies, their commerce, will, he conceives, naturally fall to Britain in proportion to the interior ruin, which has already made great ravages in this country.

If the terms offered by Britain, whatever they may be, are not accepted, I think a declaration will *not* suddenly follow, but only an increase of preparations; because time must be

given for the co-operators, Spain and Holland, who are both of them slow. Besides, it will be necessary that a body of Prussian troops should be collected, through Westphalia, in the neighborhood of Flanders, to be joined by Dutch, Hanoverian, and perhaps British troops. The more the French advance, the more they expose themselves to this danger; and you may rely, that if a large body of troops be thrown into Flanders, that country will join them *eagerly* to expel or destroy the French.

I think it possible, that in case the war should break out, there may be a treaty of partition, in which the Elector Palatine may have Alsace and Lorraine in lieu of Bavaria, and that the Low Countries may be given by the Emperor, in exchange for Bavaria, to the Duke and Dutchess of York. This would suit everybody but France, and she will not in such case be consulted.

I have not yet seen M. Genet, but Mr Paine is to introduce him to me. In the mean time I have inquired a little what kind of a person he is; and I find that he is a man of good parts and very good education, brother to the Queen's first woman; from whence his fortune originates. He was, through the Queen's influence, appointed as Chargé d'Affaires at Petersburg, and when there, in consequence of despatches from M. de Montmorin written in the sense of the revolution, and which he interpreted too literally, he made some representations in a much higher tone than was wished or expected. It was not convenient either to approve or disapprove of his conduct, under the then circumstances, and his despatches lay unnoticed. This, to a young man of ardent temper, and who, feeling genius and talents, may perhaps have rated himself a little too high, was mortifying in the extreme. He felt himself insulted, and wrote in a style of petulance to his chief, believing always, that if the royal party prevailed, his sister would easily make fair weather for him at court; which I doubt not. At the overturn of the monarchy, these letters were so many credentials in his favor to the new government, and their

dearth of men has opened his way to whatever he might wish. He chose America, *as being the best harbor during the storm*, and if my informant be right, *he will not put to sea again until it is fair weather*, let what will happen.

In addition to what I have said respecting the King to Mr Jefferson, it is well to mention to you, that the majority have it in contemplation not only to refer the judgment to the electors of France, that is, to the people, but also to send him and his family to America, which Paine is to move for. He mentioned this to me in confidence, but I have since heard it from another quarter. Adieu, my dear Sir. I wish you many and happy years.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, January 1st, 1793.

Dear Sir,

I transmit herewith a duplicate of what I had the honor to write on the twenty-first of last month. Since that period, this government, perceiving that they had been wholly deceived respecting the British nation, have made advances towards conciliation. At least, so I am informed; and also, that these advances are by a declaration that, however general the terms of their decree, they had no idea of exciting revolt, except in the dominions of the powers leagued against them. That as these powers had entered into France with design to change the established government, they are justified in turning against them the weapons of revolt, which they had intended to use.

If this should ever become an object of diplomatic controversy, it will perhaps be objected, that until the asserted meaning of a general decree be declared by some other decree, the words must be taken in their plain and natural import. Should such new decree be passed, which by the bye would take from France a very powerful engine, the case of Savoy

will be quoted, where, whatever may have been the supposed intentions, no facts existed to support the conduct which has been pursued, in such manner as to show a consistency with the limited interpretation put upon the decree. Lastly, as to the Austrian Netherlands, it will, I presume, be alleged, that not only the aggression was on the part of France, but that it was avowedly made with a view to excite revolt in that country.

But I do not believe we shall have any such war of words, for I am convinced that France must, to avoid a war, do something more than make professions and explanations. I say nothing about the navigation of the Scheldt, and the projected invasion of Holland. I shall not, either, make any remarks on the unanimity in the British Parliament, which your good sense and knowledge of that people had certainly anticipated.

Accept, I pray you, Sir, the compliments of the season, and believe me, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

P. S. The French armies are at length permitted to go into winter quarters; that under Dumouriez amounted by the last returns to thirty-five thousand effectives, after the junction of Valence and Miranda.

TO WILLIAM CARMICHAEL.

Paris, January 4th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

This will, I trust, be soon and safely delivered by Mr Short, who is now on his way to Madrid.* Herewith I send you a

* In addition to his appointment of Resident Minister at the Hague, Mr Short was joined with Mr Carmichael as a Commissioner on the part of the United States to treat with the court of Madrid, on the subjects of the navigation of the Mississippi, arrangements of limits, and commerce.

copy of what in my last letter relates to the situation of this country.

A problem to be resolved just now is, whether the convention of neutrality lately entered into with Spain is, on the part of the latter, concerted with Great Britain; or whether your Duc d'Alcudia prefers *otium cum nova dignitate* to the uncertain splendors of a great undertaking. As I am not apt to trace up to rational causes the conduct of a creature so irrational as man, I should decide at once, perhaps, that the unnerved indolence of a courtier has more to say in the decision, than any complicated combinations of state policy, if there were not a remarkable coincidence in the time and circumstance with what has passed lately in the British Parliament. Is the conduct of Spain to be attributed to a design of making future hostilities popular, by making them appear to result from French aggression; or does it arise from the dread, that war might awaken the court from that profound oblivious sleep, in which its interest and its glory are all forgotten?

On the contingent answers to these questions there results an alternative, which may operate favorably to the object of Mr Short's mission. If, for instance, a war should be imminent, I think that they would wish to avoid any contest with us; and if ease and luxury be their motives, I think you may plague them into concessions, which, after all, (under the rose be it spoken) are of very little consequence to our country; for I have no golden hopes from an uphill navigation of three or four hundred leagues.

I will not now go into any long discussions on the state of affairs here, because I have communicated my opinions to Mr Short pretty fully, and shall continue to do so until he takes his departure. The Council here talk so highly to Great Britain that you, who know mankind, will conclude them to be afraid; and this conclusion is not far from the truth. Mr Pitt has the nation now in his hand, and may do what he pleases. Will he make war? The King is, I believe, decidedly for it. Will he make war? Perhaps he can gain more by peace.

Will he make war? He envies, I am told, his father's fame. A *gentle* armament places him in a condition to make the belligerent powers bid high for his favor, while it will convince *Old England* that when at last he strikes, it is her honor which compels the blow; and then she will fight, you may rely on it. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, January 6th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

Mr Short, who is so kind as to take charge of my letters as far as Bordeaux, will go, he says, this day. I therefore take the latest opportunity to write, and to inform you, that the appearances have not at all changed since mine of the first. Dumouriez has been some days in Paris; he stays at home under pretence of illness, but in fact to receive and consider the propositions of the different parties.

It would seem that he is not reconciled to Pache, the minister of War. Pache is very strong in Paris, and that circumstance renders him formidable, both to his colleagues and to the Convention. I am told that the majority of the latter body expect soon to be supported by a considerable number of volunteers from the departments. I am also told that it cannot be long before the bursting of the storm, which has been so long brewing. This last intelligence is from one of those who, though a promoter of the last revolution, is now marked as one of the victims. He says he will die hard, but laments the feebleness of temper which he experiences among those who, like him, are doomed to destruction.

On the other hand, a person of cool discerning temper and understanding, who is in the confidence of those who direct the Jacobins, told me when last I saw him, that they are determined to rule, or perish. You will easily suppose, that this pro-

vision of horrors is far from pleasant. I have, I assure you, been not a little tempted to spend a few days with some of my friends in the country during the festive season, which would render such an excursion natural, but the critical state of things with Great Britain might take a turn, which it would be important for you to know, and, therefore, it is right that I stay here. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, January 10th, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

As I have good reason to believe that this letter will go safely, I shall mention some things which may serve as a clue to lead through mysteries. Those who planned the revolution, which took place on the tenth of August, sought a person to head the attack, and found a M. Westermann, whose morals were far from exemplary. He has no pretensions to science, or to depth of thought; but he is fertile in resources, and endowed with the most daring intrepidity. Like Cæsar, he believes in his fortune. When the business drew towards a point the conspirators trembled, but Westermann declared they should go on. They obeyed, because they had trusted him too far. On that important day his personal conduct decided in a great measure their success. Rewards were due, and military rank, with opportunities to enrich himself, was granted.

You know something of Dumouriez. The Council distrusted him. Westermann was commissioned to destroy him, should he falter. This commission was shown to the General. It became the bond of union between him and Westermann. Dumouriez opened a treaty with the King of Prussia. The principal emigrants, confident of force, and breathing vengeance, shut the royal ear. Thionville was defended, because

a member of the Constituent Assembly saw in Lafayette's fate his own. Metz was not delivered up, because nobody asked for the keys, and because the same apprehensions were felt which influenced in Thionville. The King of Prussia waited for these evidences of loyalty until his provisions were consumed. He then found it necessary to bargain for a retreat. It was worth to Westermann about ten thousand pounds. The Council, being convinced that he had betrayed their bloody secret, have excited a prosecution against him for old affairs of no higher rank than petit larceny. He has desired a trial by court martial.

You will judge whether cordial union can subsist between the Council and their Generals. Vergniaud, Gaudet, &c. are now, I am told, the intimates of Dumouriez, and that the present administration is to be overturned, beginning with Pache, the minister of War. You will have seen a denunciation against these members of Assembly for a letter they wrote to Thierry, the King's valet-de-chambre. This affair needs explanation, but it can be of no present use.

The King's fate is to be decided next Monday, the fourteenth. That unhappy man, conversing with one of his counsel on his own fate, calmly summed up the motives of every kind, and concluded that a majority of the Convention would vote for referring his case to the people, and that in consequence he should be massacred. I think he must die or reign. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, January 25th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

The late King of this country has been publicly executed. He died in a manner becoming his dignity. Mounting the scaffold, he expressed anew his forgiveness of those who per-

secuted him, and a prayer that his deluded people might be benefitted by his death. On the scaffold he attempted to speak, but the commanding officer, Santerre, ordered the drums to be beat. The King made two unavailing efforts, but with the same bad success. The executioners threw him down, and were in such haste as to let fall the axe before his neck was properly placed, so that he was mangled. It would be needless to give you an affecting narrative of particulars. I proceed to what is more important, having but a few minutes to write in by the present good opportunity.

The greatest care was taken to prevent a concourse of people. This proves a conviction, that the majority was not favorable to that severe measure. In effect the great mass of Parisian citizens mourned the fate of their unhappy Prince. I have seen grief, such as for the untimely death of a beloved parent. Everything wears an appearance of solemnity, which is awfully distressing. I have been told by a gentleman from the spot, that putting the King to death would be a signal for disbanding the army in Flanders. I do not believe this, but incline to think it will have some effect on that army, already perishing by want, and mouldering fast away. The people of that country, if the French army retreats, will, I am persuaded, take a severe vengeance for the injuries they have felt, and the insults they have been exposed to. Both are great. The war against France is become popular in Austria, and is becoming so in Germany. If my judgment be good, the testament of Louis the Sixteenth will be more powerful against the present rulers of this country, than an army of a hundred thousand men. You will learn the effect it has in England. I believe that the English will be wound up to a pitch of enthusiastic horror against France, which their cool and steady temper seems to be scarcely susceptible of.

I enclose you the translation of a letter from Sweden, which I have received from Denmark. You will see thereby, that the Jacobin principles are propagated with zeal in every quarter. Whether the regent of Sweden intends to make him-

self King, is a moot point. All the world knows that the young Prince is not legitimate, although born under circumstances which render it, *legally speaking*, impossible to question his legitimacy.

I consider a war between Britain and France as inevitable. The continental powers opposed to France are making great and prompt efforts, while on this side I as yet see but little done to oppose them. There is a treaty on foot, I believe, between England and Austria, whose object is the dismemberment of France. I have not proof, but some very leading circumstances. Britain will, I think, suspend her blow till she can strike very hard, unless indeed they should think it advisable to seize the moment of indignation against late events for a declaration of war. This is not improbable, because it may be coupled with those general declarations against all Kings under the name of tyrants, which contain a determination to destroy them, and the threat, that if the ministers of England presume to declare war, an appeal shall be made to the people, at the head of an invading army. Of course, a design may be exhibited of entering into the heart of Great Britain to overturn the constitution, destroy the rights of property, and finally to dethrone and murder the King. All which are things the English will neither approve of, nor submit to.

Yours of the seventh of November is just received. I will reply to it by the first good opportunity.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, February 13th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

Since my last, I have had every reason to believe, that the execution of the King has produced on foreign nations the effect which I had imagined. The war with England exists,

and it is now proper, perhaps, to consider its consequences, to which effect, we must examine the objects likely to be pursued by England, for in this country, notwithstanding the gasconades, a defensive war is prescribed by necessity.

Many suppose that the French Colonies will be attacked, but this I do not believe. It is indeed far from improbable that a British garrison may be thrown into Martinique, but as to St Domingo, it would require more men than can be spared to defend it, and as much money as it is worth. Besides which, there are higher considerations to be attended to. In one shape or another, this nation will make a bankruptcy. The mode now talked of, is to pay off the debt in a species of paper money, which shall be receivable for the sales of confiscated property, and which shall bear no interest. When once the whole of the debt shall be fairly afloat, the single word depreciation will settle all accounts. You will say, perhaps, that this measure is unjust, but to this I answer, that in popular governments, strongly convulsed, it is a sufficient answer to all arguments, that the measure proposed is for the public good. Supposing, then, the debt of France thus liquidated, she presents a rich surface covered with above twenty millions of people, who love war better than labor. Be the form of government what it may, the Administration will find war abroad necessary to preserve peace at home. The neighbors of France must therefore consider her as a great power, essentially belligerent, and they must measure themselves by the scale of her force.

In this view of the subject, to take her islands, is to possess but the paring of her nails, and therefore more serious efforts must be made. Strange as it may seem, the present war is, on the part of France, a war of empire, and if she defends herself, she commands the world. I am persuaded that her enemies consider this as the real state of things, and will therefore bend their efforts towards a reduction of her power; and this may be compassed in two ways, either by obliging her to assume a new burden of debt to defray the expense they are

at on her account, or else by a dismemberment. The latter appears the more certain mode. In this case, it will, I presume, be attempted to make the Saone her northern boundary as far as the Ardennes, and then along the Ardennes to the Vosges mountains, to mount Jura, and along mount Jura to the Alps. This will throw French Flanders, Artois, and a part of Picardy into the circle of Austrian Flanders, which may be erected into an independent State, and the country lying east of the Vosges and mount Jura may be a compensation to the Elector Palatine, for the cession of Bavaria.

On such a project, if it exists, the first question is as to the means of execution; and these are well prepared, if the enemy knows how to make use of them. Alsace is attached to the German Empire, and to the cause of religion. The only thing, which pleases them in the revolution, is the abolition of the tithes, and they are as much disgusted by the banishment of their priests. I speak here of the Roman Catholic only. The sentiments of this people cannot be unknown to the enemy. As to French Flanders and Artois, the cause of religion is with them the first care, but as yet they have not had a fair opportunity to show themselves, because they are awed by the numerous garrisons spread through their country. I think, as I mentioned in my last, that there exists a treaty respecting Flanders between England and Austria, but I cannot find out the exact purport. Prussia is, I think, to find her account in Poland.

As to the conduct of the war, I believe it to be on the part of the enemy as follows. First, the maritime powers will try to cut off all supplies of provisions, and take France by famine; that is to say, excite revolt among the people by that strong lever. Give us again our bread and our chains, might perhaps be the language of Paris. I think I can perceive some seeds already sown to produce that fruit. It is not improbable, that our vessels bringing provisions to France may be captured and taken into England, the cargoes paid for by the government. Secondly, Britain may perhaps land a body of troops in Nor-

mandy, with intention to prenetrate to Rouen, and cause the royal standard to be erected by the French Emigrants. If a large body of the people flock to it, they might come on towards the capital, if not, they may move along the coast to Abbeville, and thence form a junction with the army acting in Flanders. For this descent, if it takes place, is but a secondary operation; the main stress will be in Flanders, for there the troops of Britain, Holland, Hanover, Austria, and Prussia, can be fed from the ocean at a very cheap rate, and the more their operations may be confined to the sea coast, the more will it be difficult for France to oppose them, because the provisions must in such case be carried to an extreme corner of the country. Thirdly, an attack of great energy will be made on the side of Mayence, in the view to destroy totally the army under Custine, and penetrate into lower Alsace. But the real attack of that ci-divant province will, I think, be on the side of Upper Alsace, for which purpose nothing will be left undone to bring the Swiss into action, as thereby the fire of war will extend all along from the German Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. Fourthly, the efforts on the side of Savoy will probably be confined to the recovery of that country, and such diversion as may occupy a part of the French army for their own defence. Fifthly, on the side of Provence and Languedoc there will be only a predatory war, a war of alarm, such as may increase the want of bread by multiplying the consumers, for I do not believe in a serious attempt on either Toulon or Marseilles. Under this chapter, and as an incidental consideration, are the intrigues with the Turk to engage the Barbary powers. I think a British squadron in the Mediterranean will do more towards these than a dozen Ambassadors. Lastly, on the side of Spain there will, I believe, be nothing more than diversion. How great that may be will depend on contingencies, not within the compass of human foresight. A revolution at court which should dismiss the Queen and her paramour might give some energy to the administration, which at present is extremely feeble.

Having thus run through the probabilities on the side of the

adversary, I come now to what appear to be the views of France. You will have seen, that the effective army for 1793 is fixed at something more than five hundred thousand men. These they will be able to get together. The recruiting service goes on well, and although many of the last year's men return with design not to re-engage, their places will be supplied; so that by the beginning of June that immense army (barring accidents) will be completed.

The main object at present is to overrun Holland; a thing which might have been affected six weeks ago, but at present I believe it is not to be done. If the Prussian and Hanoverian troops advance rapidly, it will hardly be attempted. It is however expected that Maestricht may fall as suddenly as Mayence, and perhaps by similar means. If this should happen it would greatly impede the confederates, and of course they will exert themselves to prevent that misfortune. Never were the moments more precious, than they are to both parties in that quarter; for there the first blow will be more than one half of the battle. Should the enemy become speedily superior in the field, there is nothing to stop him till he comes to Valenciennes, and at every step he would gather new force; besides, he need not embarrass himself with convoys, because he would soon receive abundance from the side of the sea. As to the colonies, I believe that France will not attempt to defend them, and their whole commerce falls naturally into the lap of America, unless the British prevent it, and I think they will find it more convenient to neglect that small object to pursue the great ones, which open themselves to view in this quarter.

What I have just said leads me very naturally to your letter of the seventeenth of November. You had previously instructed me to endeavor to transfer the negotiation for a new treaty to America, and if the revolution of the tenth of August had not taken place, but instead thereof the needful power and confidence been restored to the crown, I should perhaps have obtained what you wished as a mark of favor

and confidence. A change of circumstances rendered it necessary to change entirely my conduct, so as to produce in one way, what was impracticable in another.

As I saw clearly, or at least thought I saw, that France and England would at length get by the ears, it seemed best to let them alone, until they should be nearly pitted. When I found this to be the case, I asked an interview with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and mentioned to him my wish that an exception should be made in the decree against emigrants, in favor of those who were in the United States. I told him truly, that I wished the alliance between the two nations to be strictly preserved. I told him with great frankness, that notwithstanding appearances, and the flattering accounts transmitted by some of his agents, Britain was, in my opinion, hostile, and an attempt at alliance with her, idle. He assured me he was of the same opinion. I then observed to him, that in such case, there would be no doubt but Mr Hammond would exert himself to inculcate the opinion, that our treaty having been made with the King, was void by the Revolution. He said that such an opinion was absurd. I told him, (premising in this place, that the whole conversation was unofficial, and unauthorised on my part, from circumstances he was well acquainted with,) that my private sentiments were similar to his, but I thought it would be well to evince a degree of good will to America, which might prevent disagreeable impressions, and had therefore taken the liberty to suggest the exception in favor of emigrants to America.

Here I left it, and changed the conversation. Now I know well, that some of the leaders here who are in the Diplomatic Committee hate me cordially, though it would puzzle them to say why; and I was determined rather to turn that disposition to account than to change it, because I see some advantages to result from it. Thus I contributed indirectly to the slight put on me, by sending out M. Genet without mentioning to me a syllable either of his mission or his errand, both of which, nevertheless, I was early and sufficiently informed of. The

pompousness of this Embassy could not but excite the attention of England, and my continuance at Paris, notwithstanding the many reasons which might have induced me to leave it, would also, I thought, excite in some degree their jealousy ; and I have good reason to believe that this effect was produced. From all this I conjectured, that both parties might be brought to bid at your auction. At any rate the thing you wished for is done, and you can treat in America if you please. Whether you will or not is another affair. Perhaps you will see that all the advantages desired do already exist, that the acts of the constitutional Assembly have in some measure set us free from our engagements, and that, increasing daily in power, we may make quite as good a bargain some time hence as now.

It remains to add a few words in reply to what regards me personally in your letter. I am very happy, indeed, to find that my conduct, as far as it was known, is approved of. This is the summit of my wish, for I candidly acknowledge that the good opinion of the wise and virtuous is what I prize beyond all earthly possessions. I have lately debated much within myself what to do. The path of life in Paris is no longer strewn with roses, as you may well imagine ; indeed it is extremely painful. I have already given my reasons for staying here, but now the scene is changed, and I had thoughts of making a tour to the different Consulates. There are, however, some pretty solid objections to that plan for the present.

The next thing which suggested itself was to hire a country house for the summer season, in the neighborhood. At length, that my leaving the city might give no offence to anybody, I have bought a country house in an out of the way place, where it is not likely that any armies will pass or repass, even should the enemy penetrate. If I lose the money paid for it, I will put up with the loss. The act in itself shows a disposition friendly to France, and as it is between twenty and thirty miles from Paris, I shall be at hand, should business require my presence. Mr Livingston, my secretary, will continue

in town unless driven out of it by war or famine. In this way I hope to avoid those accidents which are almost inseparable from the present state of society and government, and which, should they light on the head of a public Minister, might involve consequences of a disagreeable nature. It is more proper also, I conceive, to make arrangements of this kind in a moment of tranquillity, than when confusion is awakened into mischief. In all this my judgment may err, but I can truly say that the interest of the United States is my sole object. Time alone can tell whether the conduct be as right as I know the intention to be.

Before I close this letter, I must pray your indulgence for referring to the enclosed copy of what I wrote on the twenty-seventh of last month, to the bankers of the United States in Amsterdam. I make no comment thereon, only as I had no right to give the order in question, I consider it as of course, that if disapproved of I must replace the money which may be advanced on it. This is one of the cases in which not to act is taking a part, and in which it is ruin to balance.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, February 13th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

I am to acknowledge yours of the seventh of last November,* which I cannot do without expressing my concern at a resolution, which will deprive the United States of an able and faithful servant. Since you declare your determination to be unalterable, it would be idle to offer reasons to dissuade you, besides which it seems probable that ere this can arrive, you will have acted. But were it otherwise, I know not whether in my present feelings I could attempt to divert from the sweets

* See Jefferson's Writings, Vol. iii. p. 196.

of private and domestic life one, who has so long been deprived of them. Every day makes me contemplate with additional pleasure the prospect of retirement, and that tranquillity whose loss is not perhaps to be compensated by anything else.

If, however, the die be not cast, permit me to express one wish. It is, that you would hold your place until a successor can be fixed on, whom you think fully equal to the duties of the office. This may perhaps be a painful sacrifice, but it is one which I hope you will make to the interests of our country in the present very critical moment. If you shall have quitted, or persist in doing it, give me, I pray, your opinions and advice. These, so long as I stay here, will be very useful to me, and I trust not quite useless to the United States.

In whatever situation you may be, believe, I pray you, in that respectful esteem with which I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, February 14th, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

I have received yours of the twentieth of October, which was very long on its way. You will find that events have blackened more and more in this country. The present prospects are dreadful. It is not so much perhaps the external force, great as that may be, for there are always means of defence in so vast a nation. The exhausted state of resources might also be borne with, if not remedied. But the disorganized state of the government appears to be irremediable. The venality is such, that if there be no traitors, it is because the enemy have not common sense. Without the aid of venality, there are not a few who, from mistaken zeal, and from ignorance, contribute to the success of those powers who are leagued against France. Many also under the garb of patriotism

conceal their attachment to the former government. In short, the fabric of the present system is erected on a quagmire. The new constitution has not yet made its appearance, but it is easy to conjecture what it will *not* be. In the mean time I learn, that the ministers of War and Marine declare it impossible for them to go on. How all this will end, God only knows, but I fear it will end badly.

I will not speak of my own situation ; you will judge that it is far from pleasant. I could be popular, but that would be wrong. The different parties pass away like the shadows in a magic lantern, and to be well with any one of them, would in a short period become the cause of unquenchable hatred with the others.

Happy, happy America ; governed by reason, by law, by the man whom she loves, whom she almost adores. It is the pride of my life to consider that man as my friend, and I hope long to be honored with that title. God bless you, my dear Sir, and keep and preserve you. Your cool and steady temper is now of infinite consequence to our country. As soon as I can see the way open to anything decisive, I shall inform you of it. At present I weary myself with unavailing reflection, meditation, and conjecture. A partition seems the most probable event at present. Adieu.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

Paris, February 16th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

My last was of the sixteenth of January, of which I now enclose a copy. It has so happened that a very great proportion of the French officers, who served in America, have been either opposed to the revolution at an early day, or felt themselves obliged at a later period to abandon it. Some of them are now in a state of banishment, and their property con-

fiscated. Among these last there are a few, who had entrusted to their agents the certificates received from our treasury, and these last under the pressure of penal decrees either detain those certificates, or have delivered them up to those persons appointed by the republic to take charge of confiscated property.

There certainly can be no question on this subject, under the laws hitherto existing among nations; but I shall not undertake to decide either on rights or pretensions to right, especially where I am not authorised to act; but it is proper that I should lay before you a state of facts, for your ulterior decision. The only one at present before me is the case of Colonel Laumoy, to whom I shall write in answer to his applications, that I am not authorised to make payment but on production of the certificate, and therefore he must address himself on the subject to you, in the full confidence that right and justice will take place, such being the clear determination of the United States. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS PINCKNEY.

Paris, February 27th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

I have received by yesterday's post your letter of the twenty-second. In reply to which I beg leave to refer you to mine of the eighteenth, and to add farther here, that any application to the government would imply doubts, which do not exist in my mind, and for which there is no foundation. On the contrary I have every reason to be convinced, that all stipulations in the treaty between France and the United States of America will be scrupulously complied with. It is true, that the first decree for fitting out privateers was hastily passed, and needs correction; but all such correction as may be needful will be made.

In the mean time, I think it a matter of no consequence what may be the rate of insurance against capture at Lloyd's. Real Americans certainly will not pay a premium where they run no risk, and as to those who borrow our flag under false pretences, it is no matter what they pay. I hope the Americans will have so much good sense, as to see that the proof of payment of a premium to insure against capture ought to operate, as an evidence against them in the courts of this country. If I were to sit as judge, I would certainly consider it as a strong presumption, that the property, however covered, was not American, and probably should on that presumption condemn it as prize, leaving the party to his appeal, in order to take off before the higher court by good evidence the weight of such presumption. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS PINCKNEY.

Paris, March 2d, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

I think that you should be acquainted with a fact, which it is very important to communicate to our Secretary of State as soon as may be. I am informed, in a way that precludes doubt, that the Executive Council here sent out by M. Genet three hundred blank commissions for privateers, to be given clandestinely to such persons as he might find in America inclined to take them. They suppose that the avidity of some adventurers may lead them into measures, which would involve altercations with Great Britain, and terminate finally in a war. This appears to me, waving all question of honesty, no very sound measure politically speaking, since they may, as a nation, derive greater advantage from our neutrality than from our alliance.

But whatever light it may be viewed in as to them, it is in respect to us a detestable project. I learn that some sea-

men have lately by British cruisers, who claim to be Americans. I presume that the claim will not be admitted, but if the government should cause them to be executed as Pirates, a knowledge thereof would go a great way to prevent our citizens from engaging in a war, contrary to the wishes of our government, especially if, as I doubt not, the President should by proclamation, enjoining the observance of a strict neutrality, declare that all those who contravene shall be at the mercy of the party by whom they may be taken, and not entitled to the protection of the United States.

I am the more solicitous on this subject, in that we may well expect a back game of the same kind by Britain, and in such case it would be impossible for the French to distinguish among their prisoners, between those who were and those who were not English. As there is nothing more destructive to morals than the spirit of gambling, especially when murder is placed among the means of gaining the property of others, and as the security and happiness of the United States depend so essentially on the morals of their citizens, I feel a more than usual solicitude to prevent a practice inconsistent with all good principles.

I have no late news from America, and none of any date which you would wish to know. Our Secretary of State seems much attached to brevity, and reminds me of a maxim of his predecessor, that least said is soonest mended. The length of this letter will show you that I have not profited by such wise lessons, but it will also show you, I trust, the confidential esteem with which I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO WILLIAM CARMICHAEL.

Paris, March 4th, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

Since I had the pleasure of writing to you on the fourth of

January by our friend, Mr Short, I am without any of your letters. I lament this, because they always communicate to me both pleasure and instruction.

As far as I can judge, this nation approaches to the point where the vigor of laws must supply the place of enthusiastic zeal, for this latter begins to abate. There will, however, be enough to furnish out a considerable force, when the weather grows a little warmer, especially should events somewhat distant, and rather untoward, require great exertion. Another supposition, (for I do not here notice that continuation of victories which people can easily reconcile themselves to,) another supposition is a heavy reverse at a distant point. Now the effect of this would, I think, be various, according to the nature of the calamity. If for instance the enemy should strike a blow, it would probably rouse the nation into effort. If a great project should fail, it would probably spread despondency.

So much for calculation, which after all must depend on some moral causes, which neither France nor the Allies seem sufficiently to estimate, but which with me have very great weight. I believe it more easy to conquer by laws than by arms; and had I been counsellor to the Duke of Brunswick and Company, I would have repeated to him from Shakspeare, that when lenity and cruelty play for kingdoms, the gentlest gamester is the surest winner. And so, my dear old friend, adieu. Reproach yourself sometimes for not writing often, and always believe me with truth and affection yours, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, March 7th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

Enclosed you have copies of what I had the honor to write on the twenty-fifth of January, and thirteenth of February; also

the copy of a letter of the twelfth of February, from Mr Pinckney, with my answer of the eighteenth. I send these last, to the end that due attention may be paid to such vessels as may be furnished with his passports, and which may perhaps prove to be British bottoms.

I am so well persuaded that the United States will strictly observe the laws of nations, and rigidly adhere to their neutrality, that I am solicitous to prevent a practice which might expose us to suspicion, and finally involve us in war. On this chapter it is proper also, that I should communicate a fact which I have mentioned to Mr Pinckney, and desired him to transmit.

Monsieur Genet took out with him three hundred blank commissions, which he is to distribute to such as will fit out cruizers in our ports, to prey on the British commerce. I am convinced that few of my countrymen will be so lost to all moral sense, as to embark in a game so abominable, where the murder of their fellow creatures enters as a leading chance. I am apprehensive, however, lest some profligates may be led to fix a blot on our national character, and deprive both themselves and their countrymen of the great and certain advantages to flow from honest industry on the present important occasion,—an occasion, which, duly attended to and properly cultivated, will give to our navigation an increase too rapid almost for conjecture, and place us in the happy situation to be in two or three years the exclusive carriers of our immense productions. These considerations weigh much, but they are still but a feather in the balance with those of a much higher nature, which stand in connexion with the nature of our government, and of course with the happiness of generations to come. I know of nothing so dangerous, and I might say fatal to morals, as the sudden acquisition of wealth by bad means. Industry is thereby discouraged, and honesty discountenanced. The vulgar are soon dazzled by the glare of prospering vice, and the young are seduced from the paths of virtue; and virtue once gone, freedom is but a name; for I do not believe it to be

among possible contingencies, that a corrupted people should be for one moment free. Excuse, I pray, my dear Sir, these observations, which I cannot restrain. They flow from the conviction of my earliest reason, and are strengthened by the experience of twenty years.

In mine of the thirteenth of February, I mentioned to you that this country would procure the five hundred thousand men required, and at that time there was every reason to think so, because the recruiting service went on well for all the new corps which had been ordered; but it now appears that this arose from little circumstances of dress and flattery, calculated to catch idlers, and that there is a real scarcity of men. The losses of the last campaign are sensible in the mass of population, so that notwithstanding the numbers thrown out of employ by the stagnation of some manufactures, and the reduction of private fortunes, the want of common laborers is felt throughout the whole country. Already they talk of drafting for the service, an experiment of very doubtful and dangerous complexion. It would however succeed just now; but if delayed it would not, I believe, go down; and at any rate would not produce in season the required force; especially if the enemy should have any considerable successes; for you must not imagine that the appearances in this country are all real, and you must take into your estimation, that the Convention is falling into contempt, because the Tribunes govern it imperiously. They try to save appearances, but the people cannot long be dupes. It is the old story of King Log, and how long it may be before Jupiter sends them a Crane to destroy the Frogs and Frogings, is a matter of uncertainty. Already they begin to cry out for a Dictator. An insurrection also is brewing, whose object I am told is to destroy the faction of the Gironde. I think I mentioned to you, that the death of the King would be but the forerunner of their destruction. And already they see the sword hanging over their heads. The majority of the Convention is clearly at the disposition of their enemies.

The consuls will forward to you, and you will see in the

gazettes, the decree for opening all the ports of this nation to our vessels on equal terms with their own. You will be so kind as to observe, that this was done on a report of the Committee of Safety. Now you must know that the members of this Committee, or at least a majority of them, are sworn foes to the members of the Diplomatic Committee. This is necessary to explain a little of what is said in mine of the 13th, about the latter Committee. I have received indirectly a kind of assurance from the former, (which disposes entirely of the Convention) that they will do anything for the United States which I will point out, but in fact I know not anything which we ought to ask; the decrees above mentioned contain, I believe, all that we want. The history of them is not material.

I had the honor to mention to you also, that I did not believe the attempt against Holland would succeed, and also that time was extremely precious to both parties, especially in regard to Maestricht, in whose fate was involved perhaps that of the whole campaign. This town had, I am told, offered to capitulate, but terms of such rigor were insisted on, as to induce a longer defence, and this delay has saved them. The siege is raised, and unless the French army should gain a victory, I do not see how they are to escape, provided the enemy exerts himself. Dumouriez had taken Breda, and was preparing to enter Holland, being ordered by the Minister of War; to whom he replied, that he would go in, but the Minister must find his way out. This latter may be no very easy task. The enemy on the side of Maestricht are, I believe, superior in numbers; and certainly if the French in that quarter are beaten, the Allies may cut off the retreat of Dumouriez, in which case his fate must depend not only on the strength of his army, not over numerous, but also on the state of his magazines, which I believe to be bad. Should Valence be able to make good a *gentle* retreat, then he may be joined perhaps by Dumouriez at Louvain, and together they may cover Brussels.

But all these things, again, depend on some moral contin-

gencies, such for instance as the following questions. What will be the temper and spirit of those departments nearest to the scene of action? What will be the degree of hope or apprehension among the inhabitants of the Low Countries? As to them you will see by the gazettes, that they are fast expressing their adherence to the French Republic freely pronounced.

But since it has been no small question among metaphysicians, what it is that constitutes the freedom of the will, there is no small question also on this subject among politicians, as to the case before us. Are men actuated by interest, are they instigated by desire, are they seduced by hope, are they compelled by fear? Alexander, you know, cut the knot which he could not untie, and the French have imitated the example of that conqueror. Some striking examples of those, who opposed the union with France, induced all the rest to give both their *speedy* and their free consent. It is therefore a problem to be resolved, what degree of force must be produced by the Allies to operate on the free will of this people, in a counter sense. I think the solution of that problem is in Brussels.

On the whole, my dear Sir, the hour is big with important events. As soon as I learn anything more, I will communicate it; in the mean time accept the assurances of that respect, with which I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, March 8th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

In reading over my letter of yesterday, I find that I omitted to mention the war with Spain. The truth is, that it was a matter so much of course and of so little importance, that it escaped my recollection. Our Commissioners will doubtless turn it to account.

Last evening I was informed that the French army in Flan-

ders has been defeated, but as this is not an official account, I merely mention it as it is, viz. a letter sent express by an individual at Brussels on seeing sundry runaways arrive, and stores, &c. &c. coming in at sixes and sevens, with the report that the enemy were at the gates. On the other hand, you must take into account that the siege of Maestricht being raised only the third, one day's rest was necessary for the troops, which had come on by forced marches. Now as the action must have taken place at Tongres, about forty miles from Brussels, and the courier in question left that city in the night of the fifth, it would follow that the enemy must have marched from Maestricht in the night of the fourth, and attacked at break of day; otherwise the runaways would hardly have got in by the evening of the fifth. On the whole, there is but just time enough for such an affair to have happened, and that is all. If there is any confirmation I will mention it. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, March 9th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

The intelligence communicated in mine of yesterday is fully confirmed. The accounts given to the Convention are so lame and blind, that one is obliged to piece them out like a tattered writing, where whole sentences are wanting.

It would seem, then, that the enemy, though at what time is yet uncertain, made an attack on the army which had besieged, or rather bombarded Maestricht, and which was then at Tongres. The route has, I believe, been complete, and the enemy, by pushing on to St Tron, have cut off the retreat of those who were at Liége before the battle, or who fled to it afterwards; so that in all human probability the greater part of them have fallen, with all their artillery and stores. They

had indeed one road open, viz. that along the banks of the Meuse up to Huy and Namur ; but whether the enemy in Luxembourg have detached on that side, seems as yet uncertain. Probably they have not. It would seem that such of the French army, as escaped by the way of St Tron, have been totally dissipated, for it is said that the enemy is in possession of Brussels ; and of course he must have come on from eighty to a hundred miles in the space of four or five days.

The French have sent off everything they could save to Valenciennes, which is about sixty miles on this side of Brussels, and in which the broken remnants of their army will probably be collected. Going on the supposition that the allied army is at Brussels, it appears to me that Dumouriez is completely cut off, unless he be possessed of very considerable magazines, for he is, you know, in a horrible country. In front, a navigable river, and in the rear a pitiless desert until he gets back to the neighborhood of Antwerp, Malines and Louvain.

Now the enemy could be at Malines as soon as at Brussels, these places being equidistant from Louvain, through which they must in either case have passed, and the distance from Malines to Antwerp is about one third of what Dumouriez had to pass over, unless he began his march as soon as he received the news, that the enemy were on their way to Maestricht. This intelligence did not I presume reach him till the night of the third, or morning of the fourth ; and it is a question of moment, whether he took instant measures for his retreat, which must of necessity be slow through the very bad roads which he has to struggle with, till he gets to the pavement within about a league, if I remember right, of Antwerp. The intention of the enemy is, I am certain, to cut him off ; and if that be done, God knows what will happen ; for the frontier towns are almost without garrisons, the whole force having been called off to the expedition against Holland.

The force in the low countries has been stated very highly by those, who counted on success in that quarter, but I do not believe that the whole amounted to more than fifty, or at most

sixty thousand; and should those events, which are now probable, take place, very few of that number will get back again to France. I understand that the militia are to be drafted immediately, and what may be the success of that measure cannot be foreseen. I have not sufficient data on which to fix an opinion, but should it be accompanied by delay, or encounter opposition, the safety of Paris is more in distance than in force. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, March 13th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

In mine of the ninth instant I mentioned to you, that the enemy was in possession of Brussels, and so it was then asserted by authority, but it seems that he confined himself to Tongres and Liége, leaving the French army in possession of St Tron. At the same time it appears, that he was employed in pushing forward a column on his left, to turn their right flank, and had that movement been completed, the French army would, in all human probability, have been destroyed. To prevent the threatened danger, Miranda fell back to Louvain, keeping open thereby the two roads to Antwerp and Brussels.

As the enemy will doubtless endeavor to cut him off from the latter, I suppose that Dumouriez, relinquishing his expedition against the Netherlands, will form a junction with Miranda. In this case a battle must decide the fate of Flanders, and both parties will collect for the purpose all the force they can muster. I do not think the position taken at Louvain is tenable, because Brussels may be reached by the route of Namur, towards which the enemy will probably turn his attention in the first instance.

Great exertions are making here to reinforce Dumouriez, and still greater to bring about a new revolution, whose effect,

if successful, would be, I think, the destruction of what is called here the faction of the Gironde, and which calls itself the republican party, qualifying its enemies by the term Anarchists. To avoid if possible the carnage of the second to the eighth of last September, a tribunal, called the Revolutionary Tribunal, is organised, with very large and wide powers. It is one of those instruments whose operations are incalculable, and on whose direction depends the fate of the country. Opinion seems to set very strongly against the Convention. They are supposed to be incapable of steering the State ship in the present rough weather, but it must blow yet a little harder before they are thrown overboard.

I believe I never mentioned to you that a constitution was reported; but the truth is, that it totally escaped me. A paper of that sort was read at the Convention, but I learnt the next morning, that a council had been held on it over night, by which it was condemned; so I thought no more of it, neither have I heard it mentioned until yesterday by one of my countrymen, which brought me to recollect that in my correspondence I had not noticed it. I am, with great respect and esteem, yours,

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO M. LEBRUN.

Translation.

Paris, March 24th, 1793.

Sir,

Many complaints have reached me respecting the outrages committed against American vessels, by the French privateers. I have taken no notice of it to you, Sir, until now, in the hope that such examples would not multiply; and I have replied to many letters on this subject, which were addressed to me by our Minister Plenipotentiary at London, in a way to tranquillize the fears, with which the enemies of the French nation endeavored to inspire my countrymen. But it appears to me of the

utmost importance to prevent, as speedily as possible, such violations of the law of nations and of treaties.

I have already been informed of the capture of the ship *Aurora*, of Baltimore, by the privateer Patriot, of Marseilles; of the brig *Bacchus*, also of Baltimore, by a privateer of Cette; and of the ship *Laurens*, of Charleston, by the privateer Sans Culotte, of Honfleur. I will spare you, Sir, the melancholy recital of the violence committed on these different occasions, and which was the less excusable, as it was done after possession had been taken, and when no resistance was made. But I earnestly entreat you to give the necessary orders, that for the future these illegal acts, whose unhappy consequences are incalculable, may not be permitted.

I take the liberty to recall to your mind on this point, the provisions of the fifteenth article of the treaty of commerce and amity between France and the United States of America, which was concluded at Paris, on the 6th of February, 1778. Your justice, as well as your good sense, Sir, warrant me in the belief, that you will labor effectively to preserve the union between France and the United States; a union, which will, I hope, subsist forever, and become more and more a common bond of prosperity and happiness. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

GEORGE WASHINGTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Philadelphia, March 25th, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

It was not till the middle of February, that I had the pleasure to receive your letter of the 23d of October.

If you, who are at the fountain head of those great and important transactions, which have lately engrossed the attention of Europe and America, cannot pretend to say what will be their event, surely we, in this distant quarter, should be presumptuous indeed in venturing to predict it. And unwise should

we be in the extreme, to involve ourselves in the contests of European nations, where our weight could be but small, though the loss to ourselves would be certain. I can however with truth aver, that this country is not guided by such a narrow and mistaken policy, as will lead it to wish the destruction of any nation, under an idea that our importance will be increased in proportion as that of others is lessened. We should rejoice to see every nation enjoying all the advantages, that nature and its circumstances would admit, consistent with civil liberty and the rights of other nations. Upon this ground the prosperity of this country would unfold itself every day, and every day it would be growing in political importance.

Mr Jefferson will communicate to you such official information as we have to give, and will transmit the laws, public papers, &c.

I have thought it best, my dear Sir, not to let slip this opportunity of acknowledging the receipt of your letter, lest no other should occur to me very soon, as I am called to Mount Vernon by the death of my nephew, Major Washington, and am on the point of setting out for that place tomorrow. I need not tell you that this is of course a very busy moment with me. It will therefore account for the conciseness of this letter, by which however you must not measure my regard.

You see me again entering upon the arduous duties of an important office. It is done so contrary to my intention, that it would require more time, than I have allowed myself, to assign the reasons; and therefore I shall leave them to your own suggestion, aided by the publications which you will find in the gazettes. I am your sincere friend and affectionate servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON, PHILADELPHIA.

Paris, March 26th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

I enclose a copy of the letter from Dumouriez to the Convention, of the twelfth instant, which, not having been publicly read, he has caused to be printed in Flanders, and the enclosed is from Brussels. This letter, and the proclamations which accompanied it, form a singular contrast with the conduct pursued by that General on entering victoriously into the country, which I had the honor to communicate in mine of the twenty-first of December. It accords but badly also with a later transaction. He had opened a large loan, on his private credit and account, at Antwerp; but the capitalists having no great confidence in him, it went on slowly; and to stimulate their zeal, he threatened them with something very like military execution.

Having mentioned, here, my letter of the twenty-first of December, I cannot avoid observing to you that the correspondence between Pache and Dumouriez, as published by the latter, shows that the orders given by Pache to reinforce Custine were far more extraordinary than I had conceived; seeing he was directed to march in midwinter across the pathless mountains of the Ardennes, in which he could have found neither food, forage, nor shelter from the storms. Similar orders to Beurnouville had pushed him, as I therein informed you, on the road to Trèves. No good opportunity offering, I did not then communicate the result of that expedition; which by the bye was never made public here; but the fact is, that he lost one half of his army, and those who returned were as fit for the hospital as for the field, almost; so that the Austrian General, Beaulieu, pushed his advanced posts forward with impunity to the French frontier.

In the enclosed letter of Dumouriez are three things worthy of notice. First, the great diminution of the French armies in that quarter; secondly, the violence used to obtain

an appearance of union with France; and thirdly, the temper and disposition of the Flemish nation. On the first of these points, I refer for the force which he commanded on entering the Low Countries, to the above mentioned correspondence with Pache, mutilated as it is, and from which you will find that the account I had given you of his numbers was exact. Between one hundred and one hundred and ten thousand Frenchmen broke into the Low Countries last autumn, and yet what I told you on the first day of the present year, viz. that the effectives under Miranda and Valence, when united, did not exceed thirty-five thousand, is strictly true. But there were sundry posts and garrisons spread through the country, and all along to the sea coasts, making up about ten thousand more; and it is true that many have come out of the hospitals, and many recruits have been sent on; but some have gone into the hospitals, and straggling parties have constantly returned, so that forty-five thousand men were about the existent force, previous to the efforts for the expedition to Holland, about all which I shall say more presently, and only observe here, that he states the army as being reduced by sickness, skirmishes, and desertion, to less than one half of their force. Such, says he, was our situation, when on the first of February you declared war against England and Holland.

The second point, namely, the manner of obtaining the *free* vote of the Belgic people for a union with France, I had mentioned to you in mine of the seventh instant, upon very full information from various quarters of that country. The account which Dumouriez gives, is a curious piece for history. The conduct, which may naturally be expected from men so abused, I had mentioned to you on the twenty-fifth of January, and assigned on the thirteenth of February the reason why they had not already avenged the injuries they had received. But no sooner did the movements towards Holland lessen the garrisons distributed among them, than the smothered flame began to break out, and the French have already paid pretty severely for a conduct, of which the instances in modern times are rare.

In my last I mentioned to you that a battle appeared probable, and that it would decide the fate of the Low Countries. This battle took place definitively on the eighteenth, having been preceded by some warm skirmishes on the preceding days. As I mentioned on the ninth the whole force of the French, as not being more than from fifty to sixty thousand men, it may not be amiss to give here some general state of the force now at the disposition of the Republic. Speaking in round numbers, the force required was about five hundred thousand, to complete which, an apportionment was made on the first instant of near three hundred thousand, viz. two hundred and ninety-six thousand five hundred and fifty-three, on the different departments, exclusively of the army of reserve, which we may suppose to consist of the paper surplus beyond five hundred thousand, whatever that may be. Thus it would seem, that the existent force on the first instant, as borne on the returns, was about two hundred thousand.

This force is divided, and to be divided, into eight different armies, viz. that of the North, commanded by Dumouriez ; the Ardennes, by Valence ; the Moselle, by Beurnonville ; the Rhine, by Custine ; the Alps, by Kellermann ; Italy, by Biron ; the Pyrenees, by Servan ; and the Sea Coast, by Labourdonnaye. Deducting from the supposed existing force, for garrisons, sick, posts, and communications, and the numberless contingencies of service, eighty to ninety thousand, we have remaining a total of one hundred and ten thousand to one hundred and twenty thousand, in the different armies under arms.

So much for a general view. I will now give a more particular one coincident therewith. The army of Dumouriez may be stated at ninety thousand, that of Custine fifty-four thousand, that of Biron at eighteen thousand, those of Valence and Beurnonville, each seven thousand, those of Kellermann, Servan and Labourdonnaye each nine thousand, making together two hundred and three thousand. But of these there are only the three first worth noting here, as the others are all in different posts and garrisons. And, by the way, that we may finish at once with Biron's army, (intended to be about fifty thou-

sand strong, but avowedly defective on the first instant about thirty two thousand,) as it has been in a kind of small action for the last three months, and must keep up sundry posts in the county of Nice, and on the communications, the total operative force cannot exceed twelve thousand men.

We shall come to Custine by and bye; but at present we will return to the northern army. As this was to be exposed to the greatest efforts of the enemy, and as the government counted on success in that quarter for the means to dictate its own terms of peace, the force of it was to be one hundred and forty thousand; but the avowed deficiency being fifty thousand, leaves the above number of ninety thousand, deducting therefrom twenty-five thousand for the several garrisons (of which there are at least a dozen) and for the sick, we have a remainder of sixty-five thousand, of which fifteen thousand were under Dumouriez in Holland.

The armies, then, of Miranda and Valence did not exceed five thousand, and the enemy give an account of above ten thousand of these in the affairs of the 28th February to the 4th March, besides what may have gone off in different directions. The army, therefore, which Dumouriez commanded at Louvain on the fifteenth instant, could not exceed forty thousand. His loss between that and the nineteenth was at least twenty thousand. He cannot therefore on the twentieth have had more than twenty thousand left. Probably about fifteen thousand. From the Dutch expedition, if ever they get back, not more than ten thousand can ever join him, because the losses in that quarter also have been considerable. When the want of discipline and the desertions are considered, you will see that there remains but a very trifling force to be scattered through the frontier towns, in addition to the very weak garrisons above mentioned. If this army be cut off, it seems to me that the towns cannot be all defended, and if ever it should return, a very strict defensive is the utmost which can be expected.

It is proper, in this place, to say something about the plans

and movements of the enemy. From the best information I have been able to procure, it seems that the Allies intended to open the campaign in the first fortnight of April, at which period the different armies were to be completed. The Austrians under the Prince de Cobourg, including those on the Moselle under the Prince de Hohenloe, were to be near ninety thousand strong; the British and Hanoverians were to be twenty thousand; the Prussians, with some troops of the Empire, about twenty to thirty thousand. The Dutch contingent depended on circumstances. The scattering bodies of emigrants also formed an eventual force. The whole might perhaps be carried to one hundred and fifty thousand, from which it might be well to deduct one third for posts, garrisons, contingencies, maladies, and deficiencies. On the first of April, therefore, the Prince de Cobourg would have been at the head of at least one hundred thousand men, although not all united.

He was obliged to commence his operations a month or six weeks sooner than had been agreed on, because the Prince of Hesse, commanding in Maestricht, informed him that he could not answer much longer for the defence of that place, a great part of his garrison being illy disposed, and the citizens unwilling to resist while their houses were crumbling about their ears. I have reason to believe that the information I received of an offer to surrender was unfounded. In this state of things a council of war was held, and it was resolved to undertake, at all hazards, the raising of the siege. This was done by the Prince of Cobourg, at the head of about twenty-five thousand men. The Prussians, under Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, came up the Meuse on the side of Clèves and Wezel, with a body of ten to fifteen thousand men, and drove the French from Ruremonde. The French lost in these affairs not less than twelve thousand men, killed, wounded, and taken, besides the dispersion of their troops in different directions.

The stores taken at Liège were immense. Of artillery alone, above one hundred pieces of different caliber, as is said. The Austrians suffered very little, since it was rather

a rout than a battle. The Prussians lost some men. These last marched, soon after, to Bois de Duc, to effect a junction with the British troops. The Austrians prepared for action again as soon as they were recovered from their fatigue, and had made the needful dispositions. To this effect, orders seem to have been given to General Beaulieu to advance towards the Meuse from Luxembourg, and to the Prince de Hohenloe to replace the force of Beaulieu; but this line being long and parallel to the French frontier, the movements must be made with caution; and the more so, as a month was to elapse before the corps of Beaulieu and Hohenloe were to be completed.

The Prince de Cobourg seems to have sent off, however, a column of between eight and ten thousand men on the side of Namur, for the purpose of dislodging the French, opening the whole course of the Meuse up to the French frontier, forming a junction with the army of Beaulieu, and eventually cutting off the retreat of the French army, by possessing a post in their rear between Mons and Brussels, should they retire towards Valenciennes.

Such was the state of things when Dumouriez joined the army, which had fallen back to Louvain. He sent off, I presume, his orders immediately to evacuate Holland, so as to form a junction with those troops, and make good his retreat; but shortly after, finding that the column of Austrians just mentioned was advancing rapidly on his right, sensible that his enemy would, if suffered quietly to collect his force, be soon superior in numbers, and that his whole army must, in consequence, be cut off; he determined as a last resource, to fight them, because a victory would give him time to receive reinforcements, and secure the doubtful junction with the army in Holland.

The army of the Prince de Cobourg must, at this time, have been inferior to Dumouriez, because, even supposing that he had collected from the Rhine men sufficient to occupy the posts in his rear, and to carry his army to the number

of near thirty thousand, yet the detachment on his left had reduced it to twenty thousand. He had pushed forward his advanced posts to Tirlemont, but the army of Dumouriez drove them back, and this latter General marched forward by his right, so as to cut off the communication between the main body of the Austrians and the corps, which had been detached on their left. If under these circumstances he had gained a victory, it would have been decisive. It was on the same field that the Mareschal de Luxembourg beat King William, the twenty-ninth of July, 1693, and nearly in the same respective positions.

The event however was reversed. The action was very warm, and although Dumouriez writes to one of his officers that the retreat was a knowing or skilful one, (*savante*) he appears to be more indebted to the night, than to his generalship, or to the manœuvres of his troops, for his left wing was cut to pieces, and his right very severely handled. The great superiority of the enemy's cavalry would, in those circumstances, have wholly destroyed his army, had the daylight continued. Although we have no account of the enemy's loss, we may well suppose it to have been considerable, and of course much was to be done before they could attack the French, who had taken a strong post near Louvain, and the more so, as by persisting in his movement to the left, the Prince de Cobourg might hope to prevent Dumouriez from getting back to the frontier towns, and in the mean time his reinforcements were coming on.

It was under these circumstances that Dumouriez prepared for his retreat. To that effect, after having collected his scattered forces at Cumplich, he retired to Louvain, and sent off his stores and artillery from Brussels. The sick were taken away, as I am told, by water on the twenty-second, when the Commissioners from the National Assembly also left Brussels, and then some parties of the Austrians had, it is said, appeared in the neighborhood. It would seem, then, that the plan of Dumouriez, who is said to be on his retreat towards Mons, is

to go to Tournai, in order to form there a junction with the troops from Holland, to whose protection it would seem that he has committed his sick and wounded, who may be forwarded to Ghent, and thence by the canals along through West Flanders to the French territory.

In this way he will cover the retreat of the troops from Holland by the Scheldt, and the reinforcements intended for his army will be thrown into Valenciennes, and he himself will take post eventually near Lisle. This plan supposes the evacuation of all Flanders, which indeed seems to be indispensable, for in three weeks from the present time the enemy will be in complete force. He may, as it were, immediately collect fifty thousand men, by bringing up the Prussian and British troops, and these again may be followed by the Dutch and Hanoverians.

Now on the supposition that Dumouriez should extricate himself in the course of ten days, he would not, on the whole frontier from Valenciennes to Dunkirk have more than fifty thousand men; and that, on the supposition that the recruits should have joined, to the number of ten thousand, so as to replace deserters and supply the deficiencies of sick and unfit for duty, which bear daily a greater proportion to the whole number, as losses in action and by desertion increase.

I expect that in a very few days the campaign will open on the side of the Rhine, and this circumstance will leave the Prince de Hohenloe more master of his motions, seeing that a column of troops under the orders of the Duke of Brunswick will be of course sent to occupy the passes along the Rhine above Coblenz, and as the two armies of the Ardennes and the Moselle (which on the first of the month did not exceed from sixteen to twenty thousand men) cannot be increased in any reasonable time, beyond what may be necessary for the garrisons on that frontier, and to prevent the enemy from entering by the Meuse. The left of the Prince de Cobourg's army may bend all its efforts that way, and I daily expect to hear of a stroke in that quarter.

What may be the fate of Custine, I know not. He has taken great pains to fortify himself, and to defend the banks of the Rhine from Switzerland to below Mayence; but these very precautions would seem to render the passage certain, because it is next to impossible that a line so long should be defended through all its extent.

The King of Prussia seems determined to take Mayence, let it cost what it may. The inhabitants are universally in his favor, and should Custine, who is a brave but a blundering soldier, be taken with his army, the whole province of Alsace is lost. It may indeed fall in a different way, for I am well convinced that the imperial troops will make a serious effort in the upper end of it; and here the conduct of Switzerland becomes important. People differ much on that subject, but I believe that England will have a very large body of Swiss in her pay to act in conjunction with the Austrian troops, and that having penetrated to Belfort, which is but about thirty miles from Basil, the ulterior movement will depend on the existent state of things between the armies at Mayence. In one contingency an effort may be made to penetrate to Besançon, distant about fifty miles, and thence to Lyons, which is distant from Besançon, along the rivers Doux and Soane, by Dole and Châlons, about one hundred and fifty miles, but by the road, seventy. I need not say, that the possession of Lyons would oblige both Kellermann and Biron to retreat, and open the whole of that country to the troops of Savoy, whatever might have been the previous situation of those armies; for you know, that on that quarter the difficulty of subsisting *in* the country is much greater than that of keeping the enemy *out* of it.

I had mentioned to you, in mine of the seventh instant, my idea as to the recruiting, if forced forward immediately. It has been tolerably successful. In some places very much so. In others it has met with serious opposition. Upper Brittany is in revolt, and both Nantz and Rennes are menaced, while a descent is apprehended at St Malo. Does the insurrection

proceed from a plan laid by the enemy, or from impulses of the moment? Both may have concurred, but I think that, like the campaign, it has happened sooner than was expected. It is, however, very serious, and should they take St Malo, and receive a supply of arms, ammunition, and provisions, with a few troops and a little money from England, it is not possible to calculate the extent of mischief; for Normandy is, I am persuaded, ready to revolt as soon as a fair opportunity offers; and it is in that quarter, that I supposed a descent would be made, and I am still of that opinion, and that the movements mentioned in mine of the thirteenth of last month will take place.

In the midst of these troubles, with an expense which last month exceeded the receipts near two hundred millions of livres, (worth at present prices at least four millions sterling) the insurrection which I formerly mentioned, as likely to take place against the Brissotins, is still in agitation, and will in a few days, most probably, take effect.

I enclose a copy of my letter of the 24th instant to M. Lebrun, respecting the capture of American vessels, which will sufficiently explain itself. I ought also to mention to you, which I omitted in its due season, that M. Genet before he went hence called to take leave, and apologised for M. Lebrun, on account of his constant business, for not calling on me to present M. Genet, &c. &c. The truth is, that I attach very little importance to these matters, whether of compliment or inattention, and I believe that I estimate them at their true value. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

M. LEBRUN TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Translation.

Paris, March 29th, 1793.

Sir,

I have received the letter you addressed to me yesterday, as also the accompanying papers. I sent a copy of them

immediately to the Minister of the Marine, praying him to take the most prompt measures to procure for Captain Todd the satisfaction due to him, and to prevent, for the future, the vessels of our good allies from being exposed to the attacks of our ships of war and privateers.

The inconvenience, which many of your fellow citizens have lately experienced, arises in part from the difficulty of distinguishing an American from an English vessel; and from the connivance there may be, among many individuals of both nations, for making disguised expeditions. In order to preserve to the citizens of the United States all the advantages, which result from their neutrality, it is the interest of the American Government to prevent this fraud; and I have every reason to believe, that the laws which determine, in the United States, the national flag, are clear and precise. I know that these laws require not only that the vessels be of American construction, but that the Captain and a great part of the crew be Americans.

I pray you, Sir, to communicate to me the last statute made on this subject by Congress, that I may give information of it to the officers of our ports, and through them to the commanders of our ships of war. This measure seems to me essential, in order to prevent all the disputes, which might arise on this subject.

In my last letter I assured you of the sincere desire of the French Republic, not only carefully to avoid whatever might disturb the perfect harmony between the two nations, but to draw more and more closely the fraternal bonds which unite them. You have seen proofs of this in the various decrees, which have been passed by the National Convention, in favor of the commerce of the United States. I have the honor to be, &c.

LEBRUN.

TO M. LEBRUN

Translation.

Paris, March 29th, 1793.

Sir,

Yesterday afternoon I was arrested in the street, and conducted to the *Section de la Butte des Moulins*, because I had not a *Carte de Citoyen*. Fortunately a person who knew me, having heard what had passed, came to my rescue, and brought me out of the affair, on his own responsibility. I have the honor to send you, herewith, the copy of the pass given me by the Section. I beg, Sir, that you will have the goodness to secure me against similar accidents, troublesome in themselves, and scandalous from their publicity.

I pray you, also, to grant me protection from domiciliary visits. Armed men came into my house yesterday, and although I had every reason to be satisfied with their conduct, (for they went away as soon as I convinced them of the impropriety of their proceedings,) yet I think that when general orders are given for these visits, such houses ought to be excepted as are under the protection of the Law of Nations.

Will you do me the favor also to send me a passport for travelling into the interior? In the month of January it happened to me to be arrested and sent back to Paris, under pretence that the passport you gave me was out of date. I am in expectation of going forthwith to pass a few days at my country house, and it may be that I shall be again stopped.

Will you have the goodness, Sir, to sign the enclosed certificates for the members of my family? I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO M. LEBRUN.

Translation.

Paris, April 1st, 1793.

Sir,

I had the honor of receiving yours of the 29th of March, and in consequence I send the enclosed formula of the certificates of registry, with which American vessels ought to be furnished. Our government grants these certificates only to those vessels, which belong exclusively to American citizens. They must also have been built in the United States, or at least have belonged since the sixteenth of May, 1789, to American citizens. The law of the United States also exacts, that the captain be an American citizen, and that before the vessel is recorded, one of the owners shall make attestation under oath, of the truth of these facts. In fine, captains and owners are forbidden to give, sell, or lend these certificates, and in case they are made use of by any foreign vessel under the American flag, the offender shall incur the penalty of confiscation.

Such, Sir, are the regulations made on the 1st of September, 1789; and I have not learned that since that time there have been others. I have read, it is true, in one of our gazettes, that in the course of the month of January, a new law on the subject had been presented to the President of the United States for his acceptance, but I am ignorant of its contents, not having yet received a copy of it. I am persuaded however that it does not differ essentially (as to the subject in question) from that which I have just had the honor of presenting to you. I shall hasten to communicate it to you as soon as it arrives, for it is my inclination, as well as my duty, to prevent as much as possible foreigners, and especially the enemies of France, from enjoying the privileges of our neutrality.

I am fully persuaded, Sir, of the friendly disposition of the French republic towards that of America, and I shall continue to render a faithful account of it, for I sincerely desire to strengthen more and more the bonds, which unite the two countries. Will you have the goodness to give me a copy of the de-

crees passed by the Convention, to which you did me the honor to refer? Hitherto I have been unable, in my despatches, to speak of them except in general terms, as they have not been communicated to me in any other manner, than through the very uncertain channel of the gazettes. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

M. LEBRUN TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Translation.

Paris, April 3d, 1793.

Sir,

I have received the letter, which you addressed to me on the 29th of last month.

The affection of the French Republic for the United States is too marked to admit the possibility of an unfavorable interpretation being given to the accident, which befel you on the 28th instant. The precautionary measures taken on that day extended to all the inhabitants of the city of Paris, and a proof that they had no reference to you personally is, that at the moment your name and rank were known, you obtained the justice due to you.

The domiciliary visits were an equally general measure, from which no house in Paris was exempt. I see with pleasure, that the Commissaries of the Section, who entered your house, withdrew after the explanation you gave them. The respect, which they have shown you, is proof of the belief of my fellow citizens, that the Minister of a free nation, an ally of France, is incapable of receiving into his house disaffected persons. The exemption, which you claim, would have had the pernicious effect of affording the ill disposed a facility for calumniating your motives, in order to disturb the entire harmony, which subsists between the two nations.

I herewith send the papers, which you requested me to authenticate. I have the honor to be, &c.

LEBRUN.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, April 4th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

Enclosed you have copies of M. Lebrun's letters to me of the twenty-sixth of March, mine to him of the twenty-eighth, and his to me of the twenty-ninth. I also enclose under this cover the journal of the debates and decrees. These will give you the present state of our news up to the last evening.

You will perceive, that all my conjectures respecting the army of Dumouriez are more than realized. From the letters of Custine you will perceive that he has been totally defeated, for he found it necessary to fall back about forty miles, leaving a garrison in Mayence, which must fall of course, and we may hourly expect to hear of farther misfortunes in that quarter. Perhaps the Prussian army may stop to besiege Mayence, but I think a part of their force will be sufficient for that purpose. The country, as I have mentioned in a former letter, is universally indisposed to France, and I can say on good information the same thing of Savoy.

It is now very fine weather in this city, and if the season be proportionably advanced in other quarters, the campaign will be soon opened on every side. There will be a great want of bread before we have another harvest, unless peace should take place. If Lisle and Valenciennes should surrender at once, the campaign in that quarter will not be so much advanced as might be apprehended, because as yet the magazines are not brought up, and time must be allowed for that purpose.

It seems indeed probable, that the enemy have taken considerable magazines belonging to France, but even these are at some distance. I expect every hour to hear of an attempt upon Givet or Maubeuge, and it would seem from the best information to be had, that neither of these places can be defend-

ed long. In short, on every side, the horizon looks darkly. Whether Dumouriez will be able to lead his army against Paris, seems as yet uncertain. Perhaps he may experience a similar fate to that of Lafayette, but he is in much better circumstances for a high game, and much abler to play it. At any rate, the enemy derive advantage from the squabble between him and the Convention. Here they are not yet fully apprised of their danger. Like those who die of a hectic, hope gleams to the last, and the latest breath is spent in expression of some splendid fancy. In the expiring struggles, however, let them happen when they may, we shall experience new horrors. Such, at least, is the probable chance.

The constant complaints on account of the capture of American vessels, and the necessity of giving protection to such of our countrymen, as are here, have prevented me hitherto from leaving Paris. At present, the barriers are strictly guarded, and those who have applied lately for passports have been disappointed; but in a few days we shall know something more upon this subject. The ministry seem to be in a fair way towards an entire dissolution. In short, everything here is in almost as much confusion as on the frontiers. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, April 5th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

I did myself the honor of writing to you yesterday. Colonel Touzard, who takes charge of my letters, having been detained a day longer, it furnishes the opportunity of sending this day's gazettes, and such intelligence as is now arrived.

*It appears that the army of Dumouriez is attached to him, and will go all the lengths which he desires. What is worse, is that the militia also adhere, so that he has all chances now in his favor, and probably as soon as the magazines are duly

replenished he will advance, for under such circumstances we are not to expect much resistance from the frontier towns. The affair of Custine has been very serious.

The garrison of Mayence is shut up in that town, and if it capitulates the enemy will derive from the magazines lodged in it the means needful for ulterior operations. Hence I conclude, that such terms will be offered as will be accepted. Custine's left flank is entirely open, and in all human probability the several passes in the Vosges mountains will be occupied by the column of Hessians, and in that case his retreat to France becomes impossible, and he must make the best of it in Alsace. Every hour is now big with important events, and how matters will go in this city, the Lord knows. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, April 19th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

Since mine of the fifth, I learn that the militia have, in general, quitted the standard of Dumouriez, but he has about twelve thousand of the regular troops, and there is reason to believe that others mean to join him. The terror excited by his defection begins to subside, or rather it is suspended until some great blow shall be struck. There seems to be more of treason in this country than was imagined, and every day increases suspicion, which, whether well or ill founded, has always the effect of distracting the public councils.

Most people wonder at the delay of the Prince de Cobourg; but, besides the necessity of collecting his magazines, artillery, &c., which is a very heavy affair, I have reason to believe that he waits until some other schemes are ready for execution, and, therefore, it may be yet four or five days before he commences the siege of Valenciennes. Condé is a needful pre-

liminary, as in that place he must receive the various supplies which come up the Scheldt. It cannot hold out long.

You will observe that Dumouriez, and, after him, the Prince de Cobourg, declare themselves in favor of the late Constitution, with such alterations as the nation may adopt; and the latter gives the most solemn assurances, that he will not meddle with the internal affairs of France. His conduct is wise, and will doubtless gain them a considerable party in the country, if they act consistently with those declarations. It is said here, (and those who say so to me, tell me that they speak on good authority,) that the powers allied against France begin already to be disunited. That they will disagree, if very successful, there can be little doubt, because they are actuated by different interests and motives; but, I think that at present, those who assert the disunion rather speak from induction than from information. Custine has retired, you see, to Weissenbourg, and there he has a bad position. The enemy will probably attempt to cut off his retreat, before they attack him in front. As yet, we do not learn that the Austrians have crossed the Rhine in Upper Alsace, and that will be, perhaps, a preliminary to the operations against him.

As far as I can judge of the public mind, it appears that there is a general state of suspense. Success, on either side, will fix the opinions of a very great number, who will then act, to show their sincerity. Here, they hang people for giving their opinion in favor of Royalty, (that is, they cut off their heads,) but yet, I am told, that such opinion is openly avowed and supported in the streets. I am told, that there is a majority, even of the Convention, who think a King necessary; but, as they see the loss of their own lives, in connexion with the re-establishment of the throne, it is not to be supposed that they would tell such thoughts; and, therefore, the information may well be suspected. Time will show that there are among them some false brethren; and, certainly, the most intelligent must be convinced, that the republican virtues are not yet of Gallic growth.

The Duke of Orleans is in the way of reaping the fruits of his conduct, being, as you will see, sent a prisoner to Marseilles. The storm thickens all around us ; but, as yet, one cannot certainly determine how it will burst. The attempts made to excite disturbances in Paris have hitherto proved ineffectual ; but that stroke seems to be reserved for the moment when the Deputies, now in commission in the departments, shall return. It is possible, merely possible, that all may go off smoothly ; but the chances are greatly the other way. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

P. S. I should have mentioned that, I am told, there is a plan in operation here to detach Great Britain from the confederation, and to make a separate peace with her ; but I am persuaded that the attempt, in itself vain, must fail, from the parties said to be employed, if from no other cause.

TO M. LEBRUN, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

Translation.

Paris, May 14th, 1793.

Sir,

I have just learned that the National Convention, in its session of the ninth, has authorised French ships of war and privateers to stop, and bring into the ports of the Republic, neutral vessels which shall be found loaded, wholly or in part, either with eatables belonging to a neutral power, shipped for enemies' ports, or with merchandize belonging to enemies, which merchandize is declared good prize.

I am ignorant, Sir, of the reasons which might explain the motives that led to the making of this decree, but I think I foresee, that the regulations just adopted by the Convention respecting eatables, will be eagerly followed by its maritime enemies, and that in future the speculations of neutral commerce will, in fact, depend on the naval superiority of the belligerent powers.

As to the dispositions of the decree, with respect to enemies' merchandize shipped on board neutral vessels, I might go into minute observations on the subject, if this point were to be decided upon by a treaty now to be made; but this being already definitely determined by the treaty of commerce, between France and the United States of America, I will only observe, Sir, that by the general terms in which the decree is expressed, its provisions might be extended to American vessels, which certainly could not enter into the views of the Convention.

It seems to me then of immediate importance, that a decree should be made supplementary to that of the ninth, limiting the application of it, in accordance with justice and the good faith of the French nation. I have the honor to be, &c. *

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Sainport, near Paris, May 20th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

You will see by the gazettes the state of affairs as given to the public; but much allowance must be made, as I have already had occasion to mention. It is, however, clear that the greater part of those troops, which adhered to Dumouriez, have returned to their country and many to their standards. It is evident, also, that the Prince de Cobourg's conduct in holding out against the old constitution has been disapproved

* On this point M. Lebrun replied on the seventeenth of May. 'In consequence of your reclamation, I wrote immediately to the *Comité de Salut Public*, desiring them to make a report of it to the National Convention. The Committee approve your observations on the subject, and they will without delay request the Convention to make an exception in favor of neutral ships, which, by virtue of specific stipulations of commercial treaties, are not subject to the decree of the ninth.'

by his masters and their associates, since he has found it proper to recall that proclamation ; but whether it be for what is there said as to the government, or as to the territory of France, may admit of doubt ; perhaps there may be a little of both in the objections made against it.

The delay to be noticed in the operations of the allied armies proves, in my opinion, two important facts ; one, that they mean to leave as little as possible to chance, and, therefore, wait the arrival of all their forces ; and, the other, that the original plans of the campaign are to be steadily pursued. Hence I infer, that the supposed disunion, mentioned in my last, does not exist in any essential degree. It seems that the Austrian artillery was not come up, until very lately, so as to open the trenches against Condé, which hitherto has been rather invested than besieged. It seems also that the Hanoverian troops have come on so slowly, as to have given every advantage to the French armies in Holland, if the successes of the Prince de Cobourg in Flanders had not rendered the proposed invasion abortive. However, the period being now arrived, about which it might reasonably be expected that the weather would permit of offensive operations, and the country afford resources to the cavalry of the armies, we shall soon know somewhat of the comparative strength of parties.

On the northern frontier, they have to besiege not only Condé, but Valenciennes, Bouchain, and Cambray, in order to open a road in the direct line of advance ; besides which, it would seem, that they want Douay and Arras on the right, with Bavay and Maubeuge on the left, to cover their flanks. Hence results the formation of seven sieges after Condé, in order to open the road fairly to Paris, while on the sea coast they would want only Dunkirk and Calais ; after which, they might march surely along the coast, taking possession of the ports, and erecting slight works to cover their retreat, should retreat become necessary. I am persuaded, therefore, that the main efforts will be made still in that last direction, unless intelligences are established in the towns on the other route.

I learn, but on slender authority, that the citizens of Valenciennes and the regular troops are not disposed to resist. The militia, or *volontaires*, are, however, well determined. I know that the government are very apprehensive as to Normandy, and I still believe in a descent there, and consequent revolt. You will have seen that the insurgents on the south-west of the Loire have had hitherto very great success, although the gazettes have teemed with accounts of the victories obtained over them. That they have hitherto received no succor from abroad, confirms me in my opinion, that the main blow is to be struck on the side of Normandy, unless indeed the enemies of France are absolutely blind.

I learn that the army of Biron has suffered very severely in the defeats, all published as victories gained over the Piedmontese. However, as yet the French territory, notwithstanding the numerous foes, remains untouched, though on all sides greatly menaced.

Enclosed you have copies of my letters of the twenty-eighth of April and fourteenth instant to M. Lebrun, the minister of Foreign Affairs, with that of his answer of the seventeenth, and my reply of to day. These pieces require no comment. I have, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO DAVID HUMPHREYS, LISBON.

Sainport, near Paris, June 5th, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

When yours of the twenty-eighth of January reached me, (long after it was written) the war with Spain, with—(but to cut short all enumeration,) the European world, put it out of my power to send you an answer. I write now merely to take the chances which may offer, and to tell you that I still exist. I will tell you further, that I am here on the banks of the Seine, in a neat little house, in a pretty little garden, with

some green trees, and more green grass than my neighbors, for you will observe, that we are so scorched by a long drought, that, in spite of all philosophic notions, we are beginning our processions to obtain the favor of the *bon Dieu*.

Were it proper for *un homme public et protestant* to interfere, I should be tempted to tell them, that mercy is before sacrifice. I remember that about a year (or indeed eighteen months) ago, I was desired in a large society to draw the horoscope of France, to which I answered, that it might be done in three words *Guerre, Famine, Peste*. This, which appeared to me at the time more than possible, has long been certain as to a part, and but too probable for what remains. I pray God the prediction be not fully accomplished.

I will not speak to you of news or of politics, because I will give no temptation to interrupt my letter, and because the contents would not deserve the name of news, when they should happen to arrive. Adieu, my dear Sir.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Sainport, June 12th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

I have now the honor to transmit the copy of the decision made by the municipality of Dunkirk, on the third instant, respecting the ship *Fame*, which I received last night, in a letter from that place, of the seventh, which informs me that the ship had then sailed.

I have just now written to M. Lebrun, (who, by the bye, is *en etat d'arrestation*) a letter of acknowledgment, a copy of which is enclosed. I did this the more readily, because I shall have new complaints to make, in all human probability, for in the best regulated governments it is difficult to prevent the violation of the rights of neutral powers, and much more so, where, in the tempest of a revolution, government resem-

bles more a weathercock, marking from whence the hurricane comes, than a tower to resist its force. Whenever a good opportunity presents itself, I shall take the liberty to hazard my opinion on the late *events*, for I cannot say *revolution*, because it is not quite determined whether that shall be the conventional appellation of what passed in the end of May. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Philadelphia, June 13th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

It has long since been observed, that, of the three millions of livres given by the court of France to aid us in the commencement of our revolution, one million was unaccounted for by the hands into which it was paid. The date of the payment is fixed to have been the 10th of June, 1776. But to whom it was paid has never been known. Suspicious are, that it was to Beaumarchais; and that with this very money he purchased the supplies furnished us by him, for which large sums have been paid him already, and a farther large sum is lately certified to be due to him as the balance of that account. I enclose you a letter from the Secretary of the Treasury on this subject, with all the papers relative to the same, which his office can furnish; and as you are on the spot, I must beg the favor of you to make an immediate and thorough investigation of it. No reasons of State can now exist for covering the transaction longer under mystery.

I have the honor to be, with great and sincere esteem, dear Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

TO M. LEBRUN.

Translation.

Sainport, June 19th, 1793.

Sir,

I have just received the copy of a declaration, made by the captain and crew of the American ship, the *Little Cherub*, which proves that this ship, having taken on board thirty French passengers, whom the Spanish government had sent away, conducted them to Havre ; which place he left on the third instant, provided with a passport from the Executive Council, for going to Hamburg ; that, on the evening of the sixth, being then near Dunkirk, he was taken by the privateer, *le Vrai Patriote*, and the lugger, *l'Argus*, belonging to the Republic, and conducted to this latter port ; that the captain and crew have been very ill treated, although they made no resistance ; and that the French having entire possession of the American ship, one of them seized the second mate by the collar, and without the slightest provocation blew his brains out. Facts of so serious a nature oblige me, Sir, to make complaint to you, and earnestly beg that a strict search may be made into this business, and in case they should be proved to be such as they were represented to me, that the murderer may be punished with death.

I was much astonished, Sir, to learn, some days since, that the Convention had repealed, on the 28th of last month, its decree of the 23d, and that consequently the provisions of the decree of the 9th, acknowledged to be contrary to the treaty by that of the 23d, were again in force. I could not believe it, but a copy of the decree has been sent to me.

I see that the *Committee of Public Safety*, in conjunction with that of the Marine, was charged with making a definitive report on this affair, in the course of three days. It is very important to pass a definitive resolution respecting it, for the fate of a rich cargo is already depending on it, and we must expect to see contests of this kind multiply, in which cupidity

on one side, and fear on the other, give rise to calumnious insinuations, which lead persons of little information to believe, that national decisions are influenced by individual interests. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

M. LEBRUN TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Translation.

Paris, June 21st, 1793.

Sir,

I hasten to reply to the letter, which you did me the honor to write to me on the nineteenth instant.

Infinitely pained at the afflicting details contained in that letter, I thought it my duty to communicate it immediately to the *Comité de Salut Public*, a copy of whose report I send herewith. You will here find a sincere expression of sentiments, which I approve, and of the opinion of the Executive Provisory Council. I have the honor to be, &c.

LEBRUN.

Report of the Comité de Salut Public.

The Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States has just exhibited complaints of a very serious nature against a violation of the right of nations, and of treaties concluded with free Americans.

If the statements set forth therein are accurate, it is not only the interest of the Republic, but the part of honor and justice, to avenge this atrocious violation of all law, and to give to the captain of the *Little Cherub* every satisfaction, which is due to him. This crime is so much the more punishable, as the captain had sailed from Havre, for the purpose of taking from that place a large number of our brethren inhumanly driven from Spain, and thus the captures have, in his case, infringed not only the laws of war, but those of hospitality and gratitude.

The Minister of the United States makes complaint, also, that the decree of the twenty-third of May, which orders that ships of the United States shall not be comprised in the dispositions of that of the ninth of May, has been repealed by the decree of the twenty-eighth, and that a definitive report, which, by the terms of the decree, ought to have been made three days afterwards by the *Comité de Salut Public*, and that of the Marine united, has not yet been presented. The consequence of this delay is, that several American vessels, and, among others, one with a very rich cargo, have been sequestered, to the great prejudice of the owners and masters.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs thinks it his duty to insist strenuously on a prompt decision, concerning these complaints of the American Minister. He observes, that, besides the ties of fraternity, which unite the two nations, the Republic has the strongest interest to favor the free Americans, and to take their vessels under its special protection. The United States are becoming more and more the granary of France and her colonies; they manifest the best dispositions to aid us; and the courage which they have manifested in formally recognizing the French Republic, in spite of the menaces and intrigues of England, prove that their friendship for us is above all political and interested views, which might be thought to incline them to follow the direction which England, Spain, and Holland have vainly endeavored to give them.

In view of these consideration it is evident, that the murder committed on board the *Little Cherub* ought to be severely punished; that the captain should receive ample indemnity, as well for the loss and injury sustained on board, as for the delays he experienced; and that, in conformity with the sixteenth article of the treaty of commerce between France and the United States, American vessels should enjoy fully, and without any exception, the advantage which results from their neutrality, in as much as this neutrality facilitates the supplies of provisions to the Republic and to her colonies.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Sainport, June 25th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

This will, I expect, accompany my last, of the twelfth instant, no opportunity having offered since it was written. I do myself the honor to enclose herein the copy of what I wrote on the nineteenth instant to M. Lebrun, respecting an atrocious violation of our Flag, and respecting a very extraordinary step taken by the Convention in the repeal, on the motion of a member, of the decree by which our ships were exempted from the seizure, to which those of others were exposed. I was informed that the object of the decree I complain of was, to effect the confiscation of a large cargo belonging to citizens of the State of South Carolina, and which has been some time since acquitted at Havre ; but an appeal was made from the decision of the court, though grounded on the clearest principles. The captors then declared, that they would obtain a decree for the confiscation, by means of their friends in the Convention, and some time afterwards that of the ninth of May appeared, in which a retrospective clause covered precisely the object they had in view.* Such a coincidence of circum-

* The articles of this celebrated decree of May 9th, are as follows ;

‘ART. I. Ships of war and privateers are authorised to seize and carry into the ports of the Republic, merchant vessels which are wholly or in part loaded with provisions, being neutral property, bound to an enemy’s port, or having on board merchandize belonging to an enemy.

‘ART. II. Merchandise belonging to the enemy is declared a lawful prize, seizable for the profit of the captor. Provisions being neutral property, shall be paid for at the price they would have sold for at the port where they were bound.

‘ART. III. On every occasion neutral vessels shall be immediately released, the moment the provisions found on board are landed, or the seizure of the merchandize shall be effected. The freight shall be settled at the rate paid by the charterers ; a proper compensation shall be granted for the detention of the vessels by the tribunals, who are ready to adjudge the prizes.

stances was somewhat remarkable. However, I made no allusion to it in my first application, which, as you will have seen, produced the desired effect, being the decree of the twenty-third of May.* The interested parties, as soon as this decree was passed, went to work, as I was afterwards informed, and by force of money, as my informant says, produced the decree of the twenty-eighth. Certain it is, that the former was not sent to be enregistered until after the latter had passed, and then both were immediately forwarded together. It did not become me to give ear to calumnious suggestions, nor yet could I be totally deaf to a matter of such general importance to the United States. You will perceive, in the close of my letter to M. Lebrun, some general observations, which will render the corrupted members (if such there be) a little more cautious. I shall enclose herewith M. Lebrun's answer of the twenty-first instant to mine of the nineteenth. I had directed Mr Coffyn, the agent at Dunkirk, to cause a prosecution to be commenced against the murderer of our fellow citizen.

In a letter written long since, I mentioned to you, Sir, that I was in quest of Monsieur M. I have since found him and conversed with him. He is immensely rich, but seems to have been the father of his own fortune, amassed, as fortunes frequently are, without rendering the possessor respectable. If I can judge from his countenance, the inquiry was set on foot in the hope of negative answers, and the affirmative is, of

‘ART. IV. These tribunals shall cause to be made out, within three days after the judgment has been given, a copy of the manifest of the provisions and goods found on board, to the Minister of Marine, and another copy to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.’

* ‘THE National Convention, after having heard the report of its Committee of Public Safety, desiring to preserve the union established between the French Republic and the United States of America, decrees that the vessels of the United States are not comprised in the regulations of the 9th of May, conformably to the 16th article of the treaty, passed the 16th of February, 1778.’

course, not pleasing. Certain it is, that he showed no inclination to spare to the necessities of his nephews a part of his own abundance; but this is the less reprehensible, in that he treats himself no better than his needy relations.

Your favor of the twentieth of April reached me two days ago,* and now I have those of the eighth of that month, and twelfth and fifteenth of March. To the contents of the last mentioned letter, I shall pay all due attention, whenever opportunities can be found or made for the purpose. I am happy to find, by what you say in the beginning of yours of the twelfth of March, that your sentiments accord so entirely with those, which I had the honor to express in mine of the twenty-second of August, and that the conduct, which I had thought it proper to pursue, is thereby justified. My correspondence with Mr Short will have shown you, Sir, that I have been very far from questioning the principles which you state, and I perfectly agree, that there is little difficulty or embarrassment in the application of clear principles, when the facts are clear.

But while events are doubtful, the feebleness of human foresight may, I hope, be pardoned for hesitating, where things of vast moment depend on the steps to be immediately taken. A man of eminence in the late revolution, and who has since left France, urged me much to go away shortly after the tenth of August. As I had not, and have not, any reason to question, either on my own account, or on that of my country, the sincerity of his advice, I could only examine the ground of his judgment, which has always been esteemed a good one. We differed in opinion; but this sentiment he expressed strongly. 'In your case,' said he, 'I would go to England or Holland, and from thence state the existing facts, and ask my Court to decide on my conduct, without waiting for future events.' As it was clear from hence, that his reflections turned principally

* Jefferson's Writings, Vol. iii. pp. 211, 214.

on my personal situation, I told him that my conduct would be influenced by considerations totally different; and, therefore, conceiving it to be most conducive to the interests of the United States, I should stay.

In the present moment, you will observe, Sir, by the public papers, that a majority of the departments declare themselves against the authority of the present Convention, after the arrestment of their fellow members, just as in the month of June last, a similar majority declared their execration of the attempts on Louis the Sixteenth. But who will venture to tell us what August is to produce? No small part of France is in open war with the rest; and wherever the insurgents arrive, it appears that the whole country is friendly to them; so that, if one were to judge by what passes in that quarter, France would be nearly unanimous in the re-establishment of royalty, should they come in force to Paris. Then the established principle of administration would undoubtedly be, that all which has been done within the last year was an abominable usurpation, &c. &c. And without questioning our principles of government, they might dissent from the application of them, by the subtle distinction between the voice of a nation, and what would then be called the voice of a faction. Under circumstances of this sort, I am particularly happy to have received your orders, which I shall implicitly obey. Accept, I pray you, my sincere thanks for having given them so opportunely.

I will apply to the Minister for the orders you wish respecting payments to our citizens, and I make no doubt that they will be transmitted. And, indeed, I should suppose that if, without such orders, the payments were made by the treasury of the United States, the government of this country (let whatever government may be established) would allow the justice of a deduction to the amount from what we owe. It is possible that we may hereafter have occasion to insist on that principle, among other reasons, because of the plundering of our ships, of which complaints are daily made to me; and which the present government of this country is too feeble to prevent.

Doubtless there are many things of the sort, which do not come to my knowledge ; for, in some cases, the masters and crews, being taken out of the American ships and put on board the privateers, are carried very far from where their vessels arrive, and put on shore where chance directs or circumstances permit ; and, as many of the privateers are taken by British cruisers, some of our citizens may find their way to England, and some to the British colonies and foreign possessions.

I am very happy to find that it has been in the will, and in the power of the United States, to make advances for the colony of St Domingo, and also to send supplies of bread to this country. On the 27th of September I mentioned to you the plan of a speculation, on drafts to have been made on the United States, could my concurrence have been procured. Events have shown that this speculation would have been a good one to the parties, who would have gained, (and the French nation, of course, have lost) about fifty thousand pounds sterling, in less than eighty thousand. I was informed at that time, that the disappointed parties would attempt to have me recalled, and some more tractable character sent, who would have the good sense to take care of his own interest. Well, Sir, nine months have elapsed, and now, if I were capable of such things, I think it would be no difficult matter to have some of them hanged. Indeed, it is highly probable that they will experience a fate of that sort. It is a year ago, that a person, who mixed in tumults to see what was doing, told me of a *Sans Culotte* who, bellowing against poor Lafayette, when Petion appeared, changed at once his note to *vive Petion*, and then turning round to one of his companions ; ‘*Vois tu ! C’est notre ami, n’est ce pas ? Eh bien, il passera comme les autres.*’ And lo ! the prophecy is fulfilled ; and I this instant learn that Petion, confined to his room as a traitor or conspirator, has fled, on the twenty-fourth of June, 1793, from those whom he sent, on the twentieth of June, 1792, to assault the King in the Tuileries. In short, you will find in the list of those, who were ordered by their brethren to be arrested, the names of those who

have proclaimed themselves to be the prime movers of the revolution of the tenth of August, and fathers of the Republic.

I am hurt and vexed at the delay of my letters. By what you say of the advices you had received on the eighth of April, mine, down to the thirteenth of February, ought to have reached you by that time; and, indeed, notwithstanding the length of winter passages, there was room enough for their arrival. But the mischief arises from the ports where vessels are put up, as to sail on one day named, and some four or five weeks after, we learn that they are still detained.

I have not yet received the plans of the federal town, which you were so kind as to send, which I am sorry for, because, if there is any part marked out for sale in Europe, I think, in the present critical moment, purchasers would be found. By the bye, I think a plan might be formed for purchasing land, and building houses there, by way of actions, but I shall not dwell thereon at present, and will write more fully about it, when I receive the plans and letters accompanying them.

By the first very good conveyance which may offer, I will send out the dies you order. At present I have none such, and only time to write by the person who takes this with him, and who is to sail from Havre for New York. I would rather give them in charge to some one who is himself going over, for great neglects happen in the ports, as I know by frequent experience.

Mr Pinckney has doubtless informed you long since, that Mr Droz declines going out to America.* There was some misunderstanding on the subject, between him and Mr Short, which he entered into a long history of, and desired me to communicate it to you, for whom he expressed the utmost deference and respect. As I found it to be impossible to get him into the service of the United States, which was the main ob-

* To fill the office of Chief Coiner in the Mint.

ject, I thought it unnecessary to trouble you with a long chapter of little sorenesses, which were, I could clearly see, the effect of prudent caution in Mr Short, on the irritable delicacy of the Artist. I am sorry, however, for the thing, because the conversation I had with him, and the inquiries I made, lead me to believe that he would have been a very faithful and useful officer.

The assurances you give in your letter of the twentieth of April, that our fellow citizens are disposed to preserve an exact neutrality, give me sincere pleasure, as you will find from what I took the liberty to say on that subject in former letters. I fear that the frequent violations of our neutrality by the privateers, fitted out in the French ports, may provoke a change of sentiment. I labor incessantly to keep things quiet in that regard, and I think it likely that some of my countrymen may think me too much attached to France, because I do not enter into the violence of their resentments, for which there is, as you will see, more ground than I choose to acknowledge to them.

How long the war may last I know not ; but this I know, that it is very much our interest not to be drawn into it. The new constitution, upon which, at present, I shall make no remarks, but send you a copy, may, if adopted with enthusiasm, be the means of lengthening out the struggle, in which case France, or rather the ruling party in France, might triumph over all opposition. Otherwise, it would seem, humanly speaking, that if there be a perfect accord between the different powers without, and the royalists within, this campaign must put an end to the whole affair. Yet who can answer for the contingencies of war and the fluctuations of opinion? I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Sainport, near Paris, June 25th, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

I have just received yours of the twenty-fifth of March. Not having had time to read the gazettes, which are but just (and but in part) arrived, I cannot from them derive the information you allude to, but my first glance at them shows what I am sorry to see, and from thence I am induced to quote a sound maxim from an excellent book. '*A house divided against itself cannot stand.*'

As to your re-acceptance, Sir, you know my sentiments, which on that, as on some other subject, are, I think, unchangeable. It will be time enough for you to have a successor, when it shall please God to call you from this world's theatre. If such successor is then able to fill the President's chair, it will be matter of surprise to those, who can from a competent idea of the office, but during your life I consider the thing as utterly impossible. And do not imagine, my dear Sir, that you can retire, though you may resign. You will in such case become the man of the opposition, however your good sense may differ from their madness, and your virtue from their villany. Depend on it, they will cite you as being of their sentiment. If you are silent you assent, and if you speak you are committed. In the mean time your poor successor is obliged to struggle under all the weight of your reputation, as well as that of the office; and he must be a strong man who can carry either; of course a very rash man who would attempt to take up both.

I am very happy to find, that the determination to maintain a strict neutrality is so general in America. I shall not dwell on that topic, because my several letters to Mr Jefferson contain enough of it to weary your patience. By the bye, I am mortified more than I can tell you, at the delay my letters experience in their passage. I task my mind to its utmost bent to discover those events, which are most likely to happen, in order that (so far at least as my judgment can be relied on)

you may be duly prepared, and after all you hear of the event before my almanac comes out. This is provoking, and would be much more so, did I not find from experience that the things I wish are done as well, and perhaps better than if my conjectures had reached you.

I trust that long ere this you will have received what I had the honor to write on the twenty-eighth December, sixth and tenth January, and fourteenth February. You will have seen that in the end of last month and beginning of this, the long expected insurrection took place, by which a new set of men are brought into power. Sould the present society be able to establish themselves, I think M. Genet will have a successor; and if the revolution completed, things return to the point from whence they started, I am sure M. Genet will have a successor. As to those who rule, or rather the few by whom *they* are directed, you may depend that they have just ideas of the value of popular opinion. They are not, however, in a condition to act according to knowledge, and should they be able to reach a harbor, there will be quite as much of good luck as of good management in it. At any rate, a part of the crew will be thrown overboard. It is my opinion that the members of the Convention lately arrested will do nothing, for the greater part of them have only parole energy; and if I were called on by any cogent motive to act, it should be in conformity to that idea. In my letter to Mr Jefferson of this day I tell him, that I shall implicitly obey his orders; but this is in reply to the broad hint, that my embarrassments may have arisen from inattention to the principles of free government. You may rely, Sir, that I shall be cautious to commit the United States as little as possible to future contingencies. In my last letter I gave you my idea of *popularity*.

I have never thought that three parties would conveniently exist in any one country, and therefore it seems to me that one of those into which they who call themselves democrats are divided, must join the royalists. I do not inquire what negotiations are carried on to that effect, for I have no desire

to meddle with such affairs, directly or indirectly, and should be very sorry to have the appearance of siding with any one party or faction whatever, being convinced that I can best do the business of the United States by keeping aloof from them all.

Those who command the royal or Christian army, as they call themselves, on the Loire, are good officers. Their enemies have, in my mind, passed the highest eulogium on them, in saying that the soldiers are brought to such a pitch of folly and madness, as to rush on, armed only with clubs, and possess themselves of the artillery to whose fire they were exposed. As far as I have been able to learn, they profess themselves the friends of order and justice, and act conformably to such professions, protecting both persons and property wherever they arrive, and paying for whatever they take. Hence it happens, that their dominion is constantly extending itself, and if they should get possession of Nantes, which seems to be their present object, they will be truly formidable, because then by means of the Loire a passage will be opened into the heart of the kingdom for as many troops as foreign powers may choose to send thither, or if they should prefer fighting the battle with Frenchmen, they need only furnish money and warlike stores, and they would have as many men as they please, *and the most fertile part of France to subsist in.*

Farewell, my dear Sir ; may God bless and keep you, not merely for your sake, and still less for that of your friends, but for the general good of our country.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

M. DEFORGUES, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO GOUVER-
NEUR MORRIS. *

Translation.

Paris, June 27th, 1793.

Sir,

My predecessor has sent me a letter, which you wrote to him on the nineteenth instant, demanding reparation for an outrage committed on board the American ship, *Little Cherub*. The report made on this subject has been transmitted to you.

The numerous occupations of the *Comité de Salut Public* not having yet allowed them to pursue the matter, I have thought it my duty to press a decision by a letter, of which I send you a copy, and I hope to announce to you in a short time the reparation you demand in the name of your constituents.

I seize with eagerness this occasion to assure you, that the change of the chief in the department of Foreign Affairs will, in no degree, influence the amicable dispositions, which have hitherto existed in your political relations with this department. These dispositions are those of the whole nation, and every agent of the French people should be obliged to conform himself thereto, even if he had not, as in my case, the highest esteem, and fraternal attachment for the United States.

I trust, Sir, that events more propitious, than those now in question, will become the subject of our correspondence, and that, instead of reparations, I shall have to announce to you only the spontaneous testimonies of the friendship of all my fellow citizens for their allies. I have the honor to be, &c.

DEFORGUES.

* M. Lebrun, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, was embraced in the decree of arrest, passed by the Convention on the fifth of June.

TO M. DEFORGUES.

Translation.

Sainport, June 27th, 1793.

Sir,

The United States of America, faithful to their friendship for the French nation, in compliance with the request made them by M. Ternant,* have engaged in the assistance of St Domingo, in consequence of the decree passed by the National Assembly; and the payment of the four millions, which occasioned that decree, has been completed. In consequence of this same friendship, and in conformity to another request of M. Ternant, the necessary arrangements have been made for placing at the disposal of this Minister a sum of three millions, which is to be appropriated to the purchase of provisions for France.

The government of the United States, in communicating to me the measures which I have the honor to lay before you, has informed me, that the administration of the Colony of St Domingo had purchased several cargoes, sent to that island by American merchants, that it had seized others, and that in payment of the whole it had given drafts on the representative of the French nation at Philadelphia, who, for want of funds, has been unable to honor them. No one suspects that France will fail to discharge at last a debt so sacred; but in a case of this kind, delays are very prejudicial to the persons concerned. Consequently, Sir, I have received orders to solicit from the French Republic instructions to her Minister in Philadelphia to answer these drafts, by appropriating to this purpose a part of the funds to be paid to him by the Treasury of the United States. I have the honor to be,

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

* At that time French Minister in the United States.

TO M. DEFORGUES.

Translation.

Sainport, June 28th, 1793.

Sir,

I have just received your letter of yesterday, and it gives me much pleasure to be able to congratulate you upon your nomination, at the same time that I thank you for the friendly sentiments you do me the honor to express for the United States, as well on your own part, as on that of the French nation. The good will of the United States is by no means equivocal, and my personal attachment to France is of long standing, and sincere. I shall therefore feel double pleasure, whenever opportunities occur for giving new strength to the bonds which unite the two nations. I most ardently desire, that nothing may disturb the harmony subsisting between them.

Permit me, Sir, at this time, to renew to you my solicitations respecting the decree of the Convention of May 28th. I learn with satisfaction the daily arrival of wheat and flour, sent to you from America, but I feel some uneasiness respecting that which has not yet arrived. Indeed, how can the enemies of France be prevented from following, with regard to us, the example she has set them, and especially England, who, not being restrained by the faith of treaties, (since we have made none with her,) will follow no impulse but that of her own interests. And how can we complain of it, after the marked preference we have given to France, and the decree of the 9th of May?*

I say nothing to you, Sir, of the impression which this decree will necessarily produce in America. I would rather that

* As an act of reprisal for the decree of May 9th, England declared, on the 9th of June, all the ports of France to be in a state of blockade against neutral ships, laden with provisions and destined to those ports. Such ships were to be stopped, and taken into British ports.

such considerations should be presented to you, by your own reflections, than in consequence of mine. But it is of moment that the Convention should come to a definitive decision, because this delay, leaving the decree in force, exposes you to all the inconveniences which must result from it, and without any advantage. I ought moreover to observe to you that it will be very difficult, and perhaps impossible, to prevent your privateers from committing illegal and outrageous acts, as long as they are permitted to bring into your ports all the American vessels laden with eatables for countries at war with France. I receive many complaints to this effect, and often what was destined for another port is brought into a French one, which is the cause of great inconveniences. I have the honor to be,

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

M. DEFORGUES TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Translation.

Paris, July 3d, 1793.

Sir,

I have received the letter, which you did me the honor to write on the 27th of last month.

It is unfortunate, that the administration of St Domingo did not make arrangement with the French Minister in Philadelphia, to provide the means for paying their drafts. I have given to citizen Genet the necessary instructions for meeting them. The government of the Republic has already charged that Minister to testify to the President of the United States, its just estimate of the efforts made by our compatriots to succor the inhabitants of St Domingo. This act has confirmed the opinion, which we have always entertained of their attachment to the French Republic.

The National Convention, justly indignant at the violences committed on board the Little Cherub, have passed the decree, of which I enclose a copy. I hope the reparations or-

dered by the Representatives of the people will appear to you satisfactory.

I send likewise a copy of a decree, which exempts American ships from the dispositions of the decree of May 9th. I am happy to have it in my power to give this new proof of the fraternal sentiments of the French people for their allies, and of their firm determination to use every means in their power to maintain the treaties, which subsist between the two Republics. I have the honor to be,

DEFORGUES.

TO M. DEFORGUES.

Translation.

Sainport, July 4th, 1793.

Sir,

I have just received the letter, which you did me the honor to write me on the third, with the accompanying copies of the decrees. The reparation enjoined by the representatives of the French nation is worthy of its justice, and consequently the United States will be perfectly satisfied with it.

They will also discover, Sir, in that which exempts their vessels from the dispositions of the decree of May ninth, a new proof of the fidelity of the French in fulfilling their engagements. I shall give them an account, at the same time, of the instructions which you have the goodness to send to citizen Genet. I beg you, Sir, to accept the assurances of my gratitude for the promptness with which you have attended to this business.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO M. DEFORGUES.

Translation.

Sainport, August 6th, 1793.

Sir,

I have had the honor of receiving your two letters of the twenty-ninth and thirtieth July. I thank you for your attention to the affair of the brig *Patty*, and your services in that of the ship *Laurens*. I received, at the same time, a letter from Havre, dated the first of this month, and with it the copy of a decree, passed July twenty-seventh, upon the petition of the owners and crew of the privateer, le *Sans Culotte*, of Honfleur. This decree upholds the dispositions of that of May ninth, relative to neutral vessels, and annuls all measures which may contravene it.

I cannot think, Sir, after all the Convention has done in this matter, that it has decided to break the treaty with the United States of America. I therefore persuade myself, that its good faith has been betrayed into passing the decree in question. In any case, it is of great moment that we should know on what to depend. The decree of May ninth was announced to me from Havre, before it was passed. The means employed to obtain it were pointed out to me ; but I persisted in believing, that such means could never succeed, the rather, as the interests of the French Republic seemed to me obviously opposed to it. The decree, however, was passed. And you see, Sir, that England has adopted its provisions. I have no doubts that Holland and Spain will imitate her example, and that the representations of the Ministers of the United States will be met by this decree of May ninth. It has been twice solemnly repealed, in consequence of the representations which I had the honor to make ; but it has twice been revived again, at the solicitation of the same persons, and to obtain the confiscation of property, which I was assured was American.

I have been further assured, that the hope of the owners is

founded solely on the want of certain formalities, required by the French laws, but not by ours, and in themselves unimportant. I see, with regret, Sir, that great national interests thus become the sport of petty intrigues, and I believe the Convention will feel indignant at beholding the measures into which it has been led, with regard to this subject. First, a decree is surreptitiously obtained from it, which infringes its treaty with the United States, and endangers the subsistence of the people, which they are expected to furnish in a time of scarcity. Then this decree is modified with respect to the United States, in conformity with the terms of the treaty, and the principles of good faith. But, a few days after, these modifications are annulled. Better informed, the Convention re-established them, and notwithstanding this, some persons dared to declare to the tribunal, that they should again be made void before the thirty-first of July; and in effect they succeeded in destroying them on the twenty-seventh of that month.

It is for the wisdom, the justice of the Convention, Sir, to decide at length this great question, and if it desires to maintain the treaty, as I have every reason to believe, it will be proper to declare plainly and simply, that the treaty concluded on the 6th of February, 1778, with the United States of America, holds good in every point; that every resolution opposed to it is null, and that henceforward no decree can impugn it, unless the treaty be particularly designated. Such a measure, Sir, would prevent all imposition, and, by showing respect for the principles of good faith, would afford a new proof of republican integrity. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Sainport. August 7th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

Enclosed herewith you will find my account up to the first of last month. I did not send it sooner, because I wished to

comprise therein those of the Consulates, none of which are come forward. I shall, therefore, write to them on the subject. You will observe, that I charge therein twenty-four livres, given to an American sea officer. He appeared to be, and really was, in very great distress, so that I could not avoid giving what I conceived needful to carry him to the nearest seaport. He has since applied to me again repeatedly, but he has been refused all farther aid.

You will find also a charge for engraving passports. This became necessary, because from the time of my arrival, or very shortly after it, the difficulties in the way of travelling were so great, that people, with all the formalities required by law, could scarcely get along; and among the municipalities a handsome piece of paper, with a seal to it, had much more effect than the ministerial signatures. If, however, either or both of these charges be deemed improper, let them be recharged to me.

I sent out more pamphlets than those I have brought to account, because, when an opportunity offered, I put up not only those I had procured for your office, but all others which were at hand, and which having been originally purchased for my own information, I did not think it proper to charge them to the United States.

I also enclose herein a table of the value of the *Assignats*, compared with specie, for one year ending with the last of June. During the month of July, they may be stated at about twenty per cent; but upon that value, as well as on those contained in the table, it is necessary to observe first, that the fluctuations of exchange are great; so that, to determine with precision the value requires information, which I believe it is impossible to obtain. For instance, louis d'ors have sometimes borne a premium of above five per cent compared with silver; and at other times have gone at par. Nay, this change has taken place from one day to another; and on the same day there has been a difference of above five per cent in the price of specie. It would be necessary, there-

fore, to know at which of two such different prices, the greatest sum was negotiated; and also, in other cases, whether the principal negotiations were in gold or silver. At first sight, indeed, it might be supposed that the metal of highest price was the one principally bought; but I am assured that this rule did not hold good; and as for the reason why it did not hold, we must seek it in the trick of the day, or the lie of the day. Sometimes, also, in the searchings and plunderings.

But, secondly, this table, however accurate it might be, would not, I conceive, form a proper standard on which to proceed in our custom houses, because the value of commodities has been by no means dependent on that of the assignats. The prices have considerably increased, but not proportionately; and the particular increase depends on the article, so that a history of each would be necessary. Bread, although supplies have constantly been brought from abroad, has been kept very nearly to the old standard. Flesh is more than double. Vegetables four, or five, or six, times as dear as formerly. Merchandizes for export have not risen in proportion. Wines and brandies were getting up rapidly, but the war damped them. They took afterwards a great rise from the demand of the armies, so that the low Burgundies were getting up to the price of the high almost.

I am not enough acquainted with the subject to go into the needful details, and only say thus much, to show that merchandizes did not depend for price on the same principles as the precious metals, since these last were purchased by the Nation for its armies, by the emigrants for their support, and by people in general, as a resource in the moment when paper should be decried.

Lastly, the price of specie did not go on regular principles of apportionment or comparison with the mass of paper. In the months of May or June, 1792, it rose, because the old Ministers having purchased large sums of specie, their successors found that they could dispense with immediate supplies. In July, August, and September, notwithstanding the political

events, it was kept tolerably steady by the stockjobbing inanœuvres, backed with the sums in the Treasury, and also by the fear of plunder after the tenth of August; for many were plundered during the *visites domiciliares*, and it was given out by authority, that specie would be taken by force, and paper given in exchange. The benefits, which those at the centre of these operations expected to derive, were prevented by the great, and unlooked for, successes of the French arms in October and November. In the end of November, and in the beginning of December, the proportion was about seventy-three per cent, being higher than is stated in the table, because in November, the exchange was lower in the beginning, and in December at the end of the month; wherefore the average of each is diminished.

In the month of December, the trial of the King, the probability that he would be put to death, the consequences naturally resulting from that catastrophe, the certainty of another, and more serious campaign, the situation of the armies, and, in fine, the abundance of the Assignats, when the cold weather forced back presumptuous hope into the region of austere reflection, brought down the exchange to about sixty per cent. In January it was tolerably steady at about fifty-eight, and in February at about fifty-six. The paper during this period went on in its natural course of gentle decay. In the beginning of March it was still at about fifty-six; but the successes of the enemy shortly after reduced it to forty-eight. In the beginning of April, it was brought down to about forty-four; so that in one month's time it lost about one fifth of its value. From that time it went on gradually again, being about forty-two at the end of April, and then rapidly, so as to be about thirty in the end of June, consequently the degradation monthly, for those two months, was about one sixth each.

But in July it took a terrible plunge, viz. from thirty to twenty, being one third of the value taken off in a few days. This was owing, in part, to a view of public affairs both foreign and domestic, and partly to stockjobbing inanœu-

vres carried on by authority, with a view to ruin the stockjobbers. These manœuvres had, in part, their effect, for having forced the exchange below its natural level, it rose towards the end of the month, and, of course, those who speculated on a farther fall were taken in. The prime movers did, indeed, expect a wonderful rise, from the taking out of circulation about 1,700,000,000 of livres, on which the king's head is impressed; but this stroke was broken, by the necessity of confining it to one half the sum, being the large Assignats, because the small ones dispersed in the hands of the *Sans Culottes* might have deprived the government of the support of its friends.

But, besides this, the stroke was in itself a bad one, because it injures the paper more by depreciating its credit, than it benefits what remains by lessening the mass, even could the mass be thereby lessened, which it is not, for all the effect is to give a different direction to the proscribed paper in those districts which respect the decree. Many people persist in believing that the Assignats, with that condemned impression, are better than the others, and even that their value is increased by the decree, which, drawing a line of division between them, leaves the *future government* at liberty to annul the circulation now favored with an appearance of justice.

You will observe, that men calculate upon the dissolution of the present system as on a datum, although the period, in which it is to arrive, is considered as uncertain. It is far from being impossible that they reckon without their host; but the opinion is as important as the thing in respect to a species of money, whose value depends on opinion. Another circumstance, which should have been taken into consideration, and which was not duly weighed, is, that the value of the mass of paper depends on the course in the capital, and there the new Assignats must be rather more plentiful than the old; of course destroying the old cannot do much good to the new. And, besides, the holders of the old, as well as the new, being in effect the great money dealers, can by their united efforts

apportion the value to each as they please, and their common interest will excite a common action ; and they have over the government an advantage, which no power of legislation can compensate, because they act with the paper in circulation, and the government with that which goes to increase the circulation, and which, of course, lessens the value which they wish to increase.

From all this I conclude, that the paper must go on perishing day by day, and, like other consumptive patients, be alike weakened by the doctor and the disease. On the whole, Sir, to return to your original object, I believe the safest way in America, and the most equitable, would be to value articles imported from this country at the prices of 1788. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Sainport, August 13th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

Enclosed herein you will find copies of my letters of the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth of June, and sixth of August, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, with copies of his letters to me of the third, nineteenth, twenty-ninth, and thirtieth of July. From these you will perceive, that my application for an order to the Minister of France in America to pay, out of the funds to be furnished by the United States, the drafts made on his predecessor from St Domingo, produced the desired effect. Some subsequent circumstances have induced me to believe, that under that cover an attempt will be made to pay the bills drawn on Europe in favor of French citizens. I have certified signatures which seemed to be calculated for that purpose ; but, as I presume that measures will be taken of a cautionary nature, I shall not pretend to suggest any.

You will perceive, Sir, in this correspondence one of the many violations of our flag in the case of the Little Cherub,

which, being attended with circumstances of peculiar atrocity, called for more pointed animadversion. The conduct of the government on the occasion was perfectly proper. The person, who committed the murder has, however, been acquitted on the testimony of his companions, in direct contradiction to that of the American master and crew. The case of the ship is still depending, and I know not what will be the event. It now appears that a part of the cargo on board of her was for account of Flemish merchants, and to be delivered at Ostend. But more of this presently.

I must, however, take the liberty of recommending to the notice of government, Francis Coffyn, of Dunkirk, an old deputy of Mr Barclay, while he was Consul General. On many occasions, especially in the affair of the Little Cherub, he has behaved with much sense, spirit, and industry. The conduct of such business is by no means pleasant, neither is it without some personal danger, for, in the present situation of this country, the laws are but little respected, and it would seem as if pompous declarations of the rights of man were reiterated, only to render the daily violation of them more shocking.

You will see, Sir, in my letter of the fourth of July, a clause asking the liberty of an American citizen. In my applications on that subject, I have been very cautious, fearing that I might be deceived by British seamen, and, consequently, that our countrymen might afterwards be without redress; as, in such case, the government here would throw all the complaints aside as being unfounded. Among others, who have asked the protection of the United States, are some Nantucket whalers. And, at first, their requests were so artfully made, that I was near being the dupe. I have, however, declined all interference in their favor, telling them that when they embarked under a foreign and rival flag, they forfeited by their own act the protection afforded by that of the United States, and must console themselves in their present situation by the privileges, which they formerly enjoyed, and which tempted them to engage in the British service. This is the

general idea I have held out, but differently modified according to the various circumstances, which individuals have brought forward. These people are a sort of citizens of the world, and, wherever they went, were the most pernicious enemies to their native country; because everywhere they solicited, either exclusion of, or else heavy duties on, the produce of our fisheries. At present, those who were settled at Dunkirk have, I am told, engaged in privateering. Probably, if the war lasts, the whole hive may settle again within the territory of the United States, and the more they endure, in the mean time, the sooner will they adopt that salutary determination.

The decree respecting neutral bottoms, so far as it regards the vessels of the United States, has, as you will see, been bandied about in a shameful manner. I am told from Havre, that it is by the force of money, that the determinations, which violate our rights, have been obtained; and on comparing dates, events, and circumstances, this idea seems to be but too well supported. I will make no comments on the facts, because my opinions are of no consequence. The true state of them will result from the enclosed pieces, and the United States will judge thereon. I have, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO M. DEFORGUES.

Translation.

Sainport, August 20th, 1793.

Sir,

Four persons, who are sent to me by the Captains of American vessels, a list of whose names I have the honor to send you herewith, have arrived here from Bourdeaux. These Captains represent to me that the owners of their respective vessels sent them here, in consequence of the decrees passed by the Convention in favor of American commerce, and with the confidence that they would be permitted to transact their

business unmolested; that, relying on the public faith, pledged by these same decrees, they brought here considerable cargoes of grain, flour, and other provisions; that in consideration of the state of foreign exchange, the said cargoes have been sold at an immense loss; that they have no mode of repairing this loss, but to take in return commodities and articles manufactured in France; that many of them have freighted their vessels to carry merchandize to the French colonies, for French merchants; that the exportation of all merchandize being prohibited, they will be obliged to discharge what they have on board, and to depart in ballast, in consequence of losing the considerable freight which had been stipulated.

I do not pretend, Sir, to interfere in the internal concerns of the French Republic, and I am persuaded that the Convention has had weighty reasons for laying upon commerce the restrictions of which the American captains complain. The result will nevertheless be, that this prohibition will seriously aggrieve the parties interested, and will put an end to the commerce between France and the United States, which was beginning to be brisk, and promised us fortunate results. It is, then, from a sincere desire to see the bonds of amity between the two nations more closely drawn, that I beg you, Sir, to have the goodness to examine whether there be not some way, either by an exception to the law, or by especial permission, to let the vessels of the United States depart, with their cargoes, for the ports of the said States, or the French Colonies. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Philadelphia, August 22d, 1793.

Dear Sir,

The letter of the 16th instant, with its documents accompanying this, will sufficiently inform you of the transactions which have taken place between M. Genet, the Minister of France,

and the government here, and of the painful necessity they have brought on, of desiring his recall. The letter has been prepared in the view of being itself, with its documents, laid before the Executive of the French government.* You will, therefore, be pleased to lay it before them, doing everything which can be done on your part, to procure it a friendly and dispassionate reception and consideration. The President would, indeed, think it greatly unfortunate, were they to take it in any other light; and therefore charges you very particularly with the care of presenting this proceeding in the most soothing view, and as the result of an unavoidable necessity on his part.

M. Genet, soon after his arrival, communicated the decree of the National Convention of February 15th, 1793, authorising their Executive to propose a treaty with us on liberal principles, such as might strengthen the bonds of good will, which unite the two nations; and informed us in a letter of May 23d, that he was authorised to treat accordingly. The Senate being then in recess, and not to meet again till the fall, I apprised M. Genet that the participation in matters of treaty, given by the constitution to that branch of our government, would of course delay any definitive answer to his friendly proposition. As he was sensible of this circumstance, the matter has been understood to lie over till the meeting of the Senate. You will be pleased, therefore, to explain to the Executive of France this delay, which has prevented as yet our formal accession to their proposition to treat, to assure them that the President will meet them with the most friendly dispositions, on the grounds of treaty proposed by the National Convention, as soon as he can do it in the forms of the constitution, and you will of course suggest for this purpose, that the powers of M. Genet be renewed to his successor. I have the honor to be, &c.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

* See this letter, and the Documents, in *Wait's American State Papers*, Vol. i. pp. 137, et seqq.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Sainport, September 22d, 1793.

Dear Sir,

My last was of the thirteenth of last month. This will accompany a triplicate of what I had the honor to write on the seventh of August, also some copies of letters to the Ministers. By the bye, I shall cease to send you copies of my various applications in particular cases, for they are so numerous, that they will cost you more in postage than they are worth. I suppose Mr Pinckney has his hands full of similar business, for I learn, now and then, that the British privateers make as free with our vessels as the French have done.

I understand that it is still in contemplation to repeal the decree I complained of, and that, in the mean time, it has not been transmitted to the tribunals. We shall see, in effect, that this decree can do very little harm, because the fleets of this country are confined by those of the enemy, and the privateers by a decree of the Convention.

The exchange, during the last month, experienced great shocks, owing to the violent measures pursued by the government to support it. On the whole, they have kept it at about two and a half to three for one. But merchandizes have risen rapidly in price, and must continue to rise; among other reasons, which will easily suggest themselves to your mind, because the compression on the paper mass in one place must force it out in another. Even lands feel the effect, although the market has been for two years, at least, greatly overstocked with that article.

The paralyzing of a part of the Assignats had, as I told you, an effect which could be but momentary. A further decree was therefore passed against them, whose effect also diminished in the first moment. To prevent *agiotage*, the *Effets publics* were ordered to be recorded, and the India Company's property was seized; and as this was not sufficient, the *Caisse d'Escompte* was abolished. Still the immense amount

raised by political gas, could not but bring down with it the supporting balloons; wherefore, at last the bankers and brokers were laid hold of. I am told that amid the menaces against those who may remit to foreign countries, agents of the government offered some bills cheap, and that the purchasers were imprisoned as *Gens suspects*. However, experience shows that evils inherent in the nature of things cannot be prevented, otherwise than by destroying the things themselves. By the law, it is death to sell or buy specie, and yet specie is publicly bought and sold every day.

You have, I hope, received the new constitution, which you see is suspended, until the revolution shall be finished. You will have seen also, that the party of the Girondes, or Brissotins, is quite down; but as yet none of them have been executed. Probably the first great misfortune will call them from their dungeons as expiatory victims. I am not possessed of the proofs which exist against them, and it is, you know, a maxim of our law, that every man is presumed to be innocent, until his guilt is proved. If one may judge from the infinite precautions taken, one would conclude that the very great majority in this country is become royalist. I think I have already mentioned my conviction, that there cannot long exist three parties. It is said that the Brissotins, as soon as their adversaries gained the upper hand, enlisted themselves, in secret, under the royal banner; but I think strong proof should be required before that fact is admitted.

I do not mention to you the military events, because you will learn them fully from the different gazettes, and because I do not think military events decide so much as is generally believed. If the success be nearly balanced, France is so far victorious. But her resources are wearing away very fast, and the period seems to approach when the state of her finances will be of little moment, because the needful things will no longer exist; and, of course, they can neither be bought with money, nor seized by force, nor obtained through solicitation. —Will the allied armies push on to Paris? What would be

the effect of their appearance? Two important questions. To answer the first would be presumption, and to answer the second would look like madness. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO M. DEFORGUES.

Translation.

Sainport, October 1st, 1793.

Sir,

I have the honor to send you herewith, the copies of two judgments, rendered with regard to the American vessel, the *George*. By the first, the tribunal, in conforming itself to the treaty of 1778, declared her unlawful prize; but by the second, a part of the cargo is condemned, as hostile property; and the tribunal has founded its decision upon the decree of the twenty-seventh of July.

Captain Richard Stevens, of the American vessel, the *Hope*, also complains very bitterly of a sentence rendered lately against a part of the cargo of this vessel, which is incontestably American property. This captain informs me, that the tribunal of St Brieu has founded its decision on the circumstance, that in the invoice, the owners of the vessel had added their commission to the price of the articles therein comprised; a thing in use among merchants, who by this means insuring the whole shelter from maritime danger, the price of their labor, as they do that of their merchandizes. I do not cite, Sir, this sentence in the form of a complaint, first, because I have not yet received an authentic copy of it, and above all, because I am persuaded that the superior tribunal, to whom an appeal must be made, will not fail to render justice.

I desire only to let you see, Sir, how much discontent the execution of the decree of the 27th of July must excite.

Persuaded that the Convention wishes to maintain the closest connexions between our two Republics, I have given to our Ministry the most positive assurances of it; but they will

be contradicted by the injured persons, who doubtless will accuse the Minister with supineness, who does not adopt the feelings of his fellow citizens; and my efforts will fail of their effect, as soon as it can be imagined, that I do not render a faithful account of the dispositions of the French Republic, from the want of intelligence or exactness.

I request you, Sir, to pardon an observation which regards the particular interests of France. The circumstances of the moment prevent the fitting out of privateers, consequently, it would cost her nothing to cause the treaty to be observed with the greatest exactitude. Then the contrast, which the Americans would make between the conduct of France, and that of her enemies, could not but be favorable; but at present, on the contrary, every time we complain of the conduct of the English, they shut our mouths by this decree of the 27th of July. Nothing is more embarrassing for our Minister at London, and nothing can be more injurious to the French Republic, in the opinion of the neutral powers.

I hope, Sir, that you will observe in the freedom of the observations I have just made to you, the amicable and fraternal dispositions, which have dictated them. I am sure, at least, of conforming to the views of the United States, in following my own inclination, to remove everything that might change the good harmony, which exists between two nations, allied as well by the force of sentiment, as by that of treaties. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO M. DEFORGUES.

Translation.

Paris, October 8th, 1793.

Sir,

I have just received despatches, which I think it important to communicate to you, with the least possible delay.* I

* Despatches respecting the recall of Genet.

therefore hasten to send you them, in the original, begging you to return them to me, when you have read them. I am persuaded, Sir, that you will find in them multiplied proofs of a sincere attachment on the part of the United States, and of their determination to fulfil exactly their engagements with the French nation. Unhappily, they will show you, that the agent, whom you employed to maintain harmony between our two Republics, has been at least indiscreet, and that interests the most essential are, in his hands, seriously endangered.

I regret much that the letter of June the 13th, which our Secretary of State mentions to me, did not reach me. I might in that case have acquainted you earlier with an evil, the more dangerous, as distance prevents the application of a speedy remedy. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

M. DEFORGUES TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Translation.

Paris, October 10th, 1793.

Sir,

I have received the letter, which you did me the honor to write to me on the 8th instant, as also the papers accompanying it.

I shall give the Council an account of the punishable (*punissable*) conduct of their agent in the United States, and I can assure you, beforehand, that they will regard the strange abuse of their confidence by this agent, as I do, with the liveliest indignation. The President of the United States has done justice to our sentiments, in attributing the deviations of the citizen Genet to causes entirely foreign from his instructions; and we hope that the measures, which are to be taken, will more and more convince the head and the members of your government, that so far from having authorised the proceedings and criminal manœuvres (*les démarches et les manœuvres*)

vres criminelles) of citizen Genet, our only aim has been to maintain between the two nations the most perfect harmony.

I shall avail myself, Sir, of the medium of the packet boat, which brought to you the despatches of Mr Jefferson, and I pray you to give me notice of the day which you have fixed for its departure.

I have the honor to be, &c.

DEFORGUES.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, October 10th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

Yours of the sixteenth, twenty-second, and twenty-sixth of August were delivered to me at my country house on Saturday morning, the fifth instant. That of the thirteenth of June, mentioned in yours of the sixteenth of August, I have never received.* I arrived in this city the afternoon of the fifth. I had an interview with the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the morning of the eighth. He promised me to recall Genet immediately. I came home and transmitted that, which you had written for the purpose, with a note, of which a copy is enclosed.

I am busied about obtaining a proper successor, and taking measures to prevent for the future what you have lately experienced. I expect to find everything in good order by the return of your advice boat.

I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

* See these letters in *Jefferson's Writings*, pp. 247, 266. For the letter of August twenty-second, See *Wait's State Papers*, Vol. i. p. 156.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, October 10th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

I have written a short letter this day, in answer to your despatches. Herewith I do myself the honor to transmit the copy of what I wrote on the 22d of last month. The exchange has been sustained as there mentioned.

On the eighth of last month, I desired Mr Jones (with whom Mr Fenwick had entrusted his consular affairs during a voyage he made to England) to give you his opinion respecting the situation and temper of Bourdeaux, with the reasons therefor. The gazettes will have shown you, that apprehensions were entertained respecting the dispositions of people in that quarter. I believe that there is still cause to apprehend, more especially as the insurrection in the Vendée is more menacing than ever.

The conduct of the Convention respecting our treaty, will have formed a useful reinforcement to those, who would preserve our Constitution. My efforts to support the treaty have been constant and persevering, although, in my private judgment, the breach of it on the part of our allies, by releasing us from the obligations it has imposed, could not but be useful under the present circumstances.

I am very anxious that Consuls and Vice Consuls should be appointed in all the ports. My countrymen are incessantly applying to me from every quarter about property taken from them. I am desired from abroad to claim such property. The courts ellicane very much here, under the pretence that claimants do not produce proper authority from the owners, &c. I have decidedly refused to lend my name on such occasions, because I am certain that I should be thereupon represented as a party interested, and, of course, my representations against the iniquitous proceedings, which are but too frequent, would be disregarded. It happens also that I am called upon to name proper agents in the ports where there is no Consul. In

such cases, I must take the recommendation of a banker, and incur the risk of placing a person, interested in a capture, as protector of the property taken.

The state of public affairs here involves me in another very disagreeable predicament. My fellow citizens are aggrieved and apply for redress, to which they are justly entitled, and which they are led to expect with the greater certainty, as every public act breathes warm attachment to the United States. On the other hand, it is frequently impossible to obtain redress, because the government, omnipotent in some cases, is, in others, not merely feeble, but enslaved. I am forced to see that my demands must embarrass and frequently irritate them. The ministers, who ought to be accountable agents of public authority, are placed in such direct subordination to the *Comité de Salut Public*, that even the common routine must await their *fiat*, and they are unaccountable, and swayed by the terror of an insurrection, which may be excited at any moment, should they displease the leaders of this city. Consequently, while they see and lament the consequences of many acts, they are obliged to commit them.

A knowledge of this reduces me to the necessity of choosing between national and particular interests. In preferring the former, the latter become clamorous, and I am sure that I shall be represented as an idle and unprofitable servant. To this inevitable evil I must submit. But another has arisen out of it, which gives me concern. In assigning to complainants the reasons why their expectations must be disappointed, I have been obliged to state things, which, being repeated and misrepresented, have produced a disagreeable effect in the minds of those, who are to decide on the applications I make.

This will appear more clearly from an example. On the twentieth of August a deputation of four ship captains, chosen by their brethren of Bordeaux, called upon me with a representation of the injustice they experienced in being prevent-

ed from sailing with their cargoes, &c. Their suffering was occasioned by one of those decrees, which, being commanded by the popular cry in a time of violence, the legislature, though it may perceive the impolicy, dares not repeal. The deputation, as is natural, had flattered themselves with immediate and ample redress. It was my duty to moderate their expectations, and to explain the difficulties. Interest is often blind and seldom just. My moderation was ill suited to their wishes, and my letter to the minister, of which a copy is enclosed, seemed to them rather an abandonment of their cause, than the prosecution of the only redress which appeared to me attainable, and in the only way by which it might be effected. I had cautioned them particularly not to ask too much, because they would thereby run the risk of not obtaining what they asked, or, if they should obtain it, of seeing their hopes blasted in the bud, by a repeal of an indulgent decree.

What had passed respecting the article of our treaty, favorable to the navigation of neutral vessels, was an instance so clear of the influence which prevails in the Convention over the principles of policy, as well as of justice, that, while it guided my advice, it ought to have swayed their conduct. Inclosed you have a copy of their memorial to the Convention. I have not thought it worth while to inquire by whom it was written. The style shows it to be from a French hand. I learn that a favorable reception was secured by repeating such parts of my conversation, as might at once irritate the members of the *Comité de Salut Public*, and justify the personal application of American citizens while their Minister was on the spot. A decree was obtained, and before it could be executed was repealed.

Thus it has happened, that they did mischief, without any benefit to themselves, and only served an ambition so contemptible, that I shall draw over it the veil of oblivion. The important facts of this matter came to my knowledge in the close of the last month, and, therefore, in mine of the first

instant to M. Deforgues, of which a copy is enclosed, I took occasion to meet the mischief without going out of my way to seek it. This was the situation of things, when I received your important despatches. I need not comment upon it, because you will naturally place yourself in my situation and feel its unpleasantness.

I will not now give you anything in the style of news, deferring that until the moment when Captain Culver shall be about to depart. In the mean time, I pray you to accept the assurances of that esteem and respect, with which I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO M. DEFORGUES.

Translation.

Paris, October 12th, 1793.

Sir,

I have the honor to send you herein enclosed, the copy of a letter, which has been addressed to me by citizen Postic, a lawyer residing at Morlaix. It appears, that in the proceedings of which he has given an account, there are extraordinary irregularities, and I think it my duty to inform you of them, as on the justice of tribunals often depends the salvation, and always the prosperity of a State.

I request you at the same time, Sir, to permit me to make two general observations on the whole of this business; one of which applies to the organization, and the other to the proceedings of the commercial tribunals. The referring of questions on sea prizes to these tribunals, appears to me dangerous, since they involve the interpretation of the treaties, and the application of the law of nations; consequently of peace and of war. Now we may be permitted to entertain some doubt, as to the knowledge of the judges, and we ought besides to fear, lest they may be interested, as owners of privateers, in the questions which are submitted to them.

But whatever may be the organization of the tribunals, it appears to me essential, Sir, that in their proceedings they should receive all the claims which may be made to them; that they should even invite, without waiting for the authority of the persons interested, who are often at the distance of one thousand leagues. The jurisdiction of the tribunals, within whose cognizance are the questions of prize, is *in rem*. They take possession of the thing, and by that means render themselves responsible for it. Now as the tribunals, which are the depository of the thing, ought not to dispossess themselves of it, without a formal authoritative act of the true proprietor, it is their duty, not only to admit, but also to seek proofs, which may establish to whom the property truly belongs. This is a double duty, towards the neutral proprietor, and towards their own nation; for every government, which permits its citizens to fit out privateers, arms with the destructive sword of war, hands which are interested to extend its ravages, and renders itself responsible for the abuses, which result from so dangerous a delegation of sovereignty. For the purpose of repressing them, the Admiralty tribunals have been established throughout the different nations of Europe. In these tribunals, the government furnishes the means of information, by the facility with which it admits therein every species of claim. It preserves, by appeals, the right of deciding in the last resort on the contests which therein arise; and it gives the necessary time to enlighten its conscience on thorny questions, before the pronouncing of a sentence, which might extend or prolong the horrors of war.

These, Sir, are the reflections which experience has dictated to me. They daily make on me a more lively impression, on account of the claims addressed to me by my countrymen, of which I have communicated to you but a very small part. I always send to the tribunals the injured persons, by giving them the most positive assurances, that they will there obtain complete and prompt justice. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

M. DEFORGUES TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Translation.

Paris, October 14th, 1793.

Sir,

You have complained of the fraud committed by the captors of the ship *Peggy*, in taking away the papers, which proved her cargo to be American. The lawyer, who informed you of this fact, proposes to collect the necessary proofs. It is determined, as soon as your correspondent at Morlaix shall transmit these proofs, to punish the guilty according to the utmost rigor of the law.

You observe that it is to be feared, that the judges may be interested in the cases submitted to them. To avoid such an inconvenience, the law grants to the injured party the resource of an appeal, and in the last resort a direct intervention of the administration, and legislative body.

The extreme rigor, with which the English and the other belligerent powers treat all the neutral vessels destined for France, has put the Republic to the painful necessity of arresting, by way of reprisal, in such vessels the provisions belonging to its enemies. This severe measure, clearly explained in the decree of the ninth of May, of which I enclose you a copy, is the result of the most imperious circumstances. It will continue only as long as our enemies employ against us means disapproved of by the laws of humanity, and by those of war. In casting your eye on this law, you can hardly, Sir, avoid the conviction, that it was necessary and just; that the Republic could no longer, without inattention to itself, preserve tolerable decency towards its implacable and ferocious enemies, and that the system of depriving them of foreign produce was also to dissipate its means of offence.

In comparing this law with the declaration made by the British government, at Stockholm, Copenhagen, Florence, and probably at Philadelphia, you will observe an extreme difference between our manner of thinking and that of our enemies.

You will see on the one hand, the firm determination of destroying several millions of victims, merely to satisfy a spirit of vengeance or of ambition, and on the other, the desire of repelling unjust aggressions by severe laws, and a regret at being reduced to that extremity.

Here then, Sir, in two words is the situation in which the Republic stands. Its enemies have openly usurped the right of seizing all the provisions, which are destined to it, and even all the Frenchmen found on board of neutral vessels. But it seems that France, attacked on all sides, abandoned to its own strength, without allies, without foreign succor, should confine herself scrupulously to the maxims of the law of nations, so cruelly violated by her enemies. Hence it would result, that the neutrality of several powers would be partial, that it would operate only in favor of our enemies, whose commerce would be peaceably carried on under the shelter of a borrowed flag, while ours could not under any flag whatever.

The law of the ninth of May is conditional, whilst the declarations of the combined powers are positive. It is in their power to put a period to the execution of this law, by permitting neutral vessels to communicate freely with France.

These observations, Sir, which you are too just not to appreciate, apply to the greater part of the claims, which you have addressed to me for some time. I have done, with respect to several of them, all that depended on me, in order to obtain in favor of your countrymen an exception of the general measures, adopted with regard to neutral nations. I have used, among others, all the means with which your letters furnished me, to have restored the ship *Laurens*; but I have met with insurmountable obstacles, in the established laws, and in the opinion of the commercial tribunal of Havre. The tribunal has neglected nothing to render justice to the owners of this vessel. It has consented among other things, to have translated two hundred and sixty-one letters, merely to prove in the most authentic manner the property of the cargo. The in-

interested have besides avowed themselves, that they had neglected an essential formality required by our laws.

You must be satisfied, Sir, with the manner in which the request, presented by the American captains from Bordeaux, has been received. This fact, and several others of the same kind, which could not escape your attention, must have convinced you, that when the particular circumstances of the Republic permitted the administration to favor your countrymen, it was eager to give to them testimonies of the desire, which it always has had, of bringing nearer and nearer the citizens and the interests of the two countries.

We hope, that the government of the United States will attribute to their true cause, the abuses of which you complain, as well as other violations of which our cruisers may render themselves guilty, in the course of the present war. It must perceive how difficult it is, to contain within just limits the indignation of our marines, and in general of all the French patriots, against a people who speak the same language, and have the same habits, as the free Americans. The difficulty of distinguishing our allies from our enemies, has often been the cause of offences committed on board your vessels; all that the administration could do, is to order indemnification to those who have suffered, and to punish the guilty.

I enclose herein several copies of the navigation act, decreed by the representatives of the people. I request you to make the dispositions of them known to the government of the United States. It will there find the basis of a system connecting more and more the interests of the two nations.

DEFORGUES.

P. S. I enclose herein, Sir, an *arret* of the Committee of Public Safety, which fulfils in part the object proposed in your letter of the 13th of this month. I shall have the honor of communicating to you the measures, which shall be taken in the sequel.

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

Paris, October 17th, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

Mr Livingston delivered to me yours of the 25th of July. He says that you alone gave him an idea of this country like the reality. His astonishment proves that he did not believe you, and, could you hear him, you might, in your turn, be astonished to find that your sound understanding, while it grasped the future event, had never contemplated the progressive circumstances. I leave to others the painful task of drawing pictures, which, to resemble the truth, must, like an Indian warrior, be painted red and black.

It is in your character of Financier, that I transmit the annexed report, which suspended for a few doubtful days the weight which, with crushing force, falls on the monied men. Early in 1789, I ventured to declare, from what I then observed, that the laws of property being violated, all would, in their turns, be sacrificed on the same altar. Already the Church, the Magistrature, the Nobility have passed away. Bankers, merchants, and manufacturers are now in the crucible. I leave to your algebraic science to resolve the problem of how long a supposed society can exist, after property shall have been done away. Perhaps you may be too busy to form equations, and may reply as a statesman, that government being instituted to protect property, is respected only in proportion to the fulfilment of that duty, and durable only as it is respectable. I respect you too much to contradict your opinions, and therefore confine myself to the more agreeable task of assuring you that I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, October 18th, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

You will see by the official correspondence, that your orders are complied with, and that your intentions are fulfilled. Permit me on this occasion to remark, that had the people of America been well informed of the state of things on this side of the Atlantic, no one would have dared to adopt the conduct which M. Genet has pursued. In reading the few gazettes which have reached me, I am surprised to see so little sound intelligence.

The present government is evidently a despotism both in principle and practice. The Convention now consists of only a part of those, who were chosen to frame a constitution. These, after putting under arrest their fellows, claim all power, and have delegated the greater part of it to a *Committee of Safety*. You will observe, that one of the ordinary measures of government is to send out Commissioners with unlimited authority. They are invested with power to remove officers chosen by the people, and put others in their places. This power, as well as that of imprisoning on suspicion, is liberally exercised. The revolutionary tribunal established here to judge on general principles, gives unbounded scope to will. It is an emphatical phrase in fashion among the patriots, that *terror is the order of the day*. Some years have elapsed since Montesquieu wrote, that the principle of arbitrary governments is *fear*.

The Queen was executed the day before yesterday. Insulted during her trial, and reviled in her last moments, she behaved with dignity throughout. This execution will, I think, give to future hostilities a deeper dye, and unite more intimately the allied powers. It will silence the opposition of those, who would not listen to the dismemberment of this country, and, therefore it may be concluded that the blow by which she died was directed from a distance.

But whatever may be the lot of France in remote futurity, and putting aside the military events, it seems evident that she must soon be governed by a single despot. Whether she will pass to that point through the medium of a triumvirate, or other small body of men, seems as yet undetermined. I think it most probable that she will. A great and awful crisis seems to be near at hand. A blow is, I am told, meditated which will shroud in grief and horror a guilty land. Already the prisons are surcharged with persons, who consider themselves victims. Nature recoils, and I yet hope that these ideas are circulated only to inspire fear. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO M. DEFORGUES.

Translation.

Paris, October 19th, 1793.

Sir,

The attention, which several pressing affairs required, made it impossible for me sooner to answer the letter, which you did me the honor of writing to me on the 14th. I have examined, with respectful care, the decree of the 9th of May, emanating from the conduct of your enemies, and supported by some reasons to which you have given their greatest lustre.

It is possible, Sir, that the difference of our position leads us to see the same object in a different manner. But although I cannot be of your opinion, I do not intend farther to discuss the considerations, which have produced the decision of the French government. I confine myself to the rendering of a faithful account of it to the government of the United States, and I am persuaded that in considering them, liberal friendship will put in the balance the difficulties of a revolution, and of a war without example.

I ought, however, to observe to you, Sir, that the question

does not appear to me to turn on the law of nations, but on an exception to that law, by the stipulations of a treaty. This treaty, in derogating from this law, in favor of merchandizes of your enemies found in our vessels, has derogated, in like manner, from it, to the prejudice of our merchandizes found in the vessels of your enemies. We have seen at Philadelphia the public sale of a cargo, the property of one of our citizens, taken by a French privateer on board an English vessel. All opposition was of no avail, because, according to the constitution, our treaties are the supreme law of the land. You will agree, Sir, that it is hard for my fellow citizens not to have the advantage either of the treaty or of the law of nations; to lose their merchandizes by the treaty, and not to be able to compensate themselves for it, under the protection of this same treaty, by the freight of enemy's merchandizes. In comparing the facts of the same epoch, you will be amazed on seeing what passed at Paris and at Philadelphia. Your good sense will lead you to anticipate the claims of our merchants, and the insinuations of our enemies. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, October 19th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

My last will accompany this, and I enclose herein the copies of letters from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the tenth, fourteenth, and seventeenth instants, and also copies of mine to him of the 11th, 12th, and 13th, and also one just written.

By his letter of the tenth, you will see the determination to act decisively. In a subsequent conversation he assured me, that Genet should be *punished*. I replied that the United States had only ordered me to ask his recall, and I could go no farther. The idea is to send over a Commission of three or four persons, and to authorise that board to send him over a

prisoner. I kept the advice boat here a week, in order to embark the Commissioners on board of her. But although the instructions are all ready, there remains some little embarrassment about the appointment of one of the persons. This prevents them from being ready; and, as it appears to me very important that you should have early advice, I cannot by any longer delay risk the near approach of winter on the American coast.

It is probable that the successor of M. Genet may ask the interposition of our government in the discussions likely to arise. I have given assurances to the extent of what our laws and constitution may authorise. You will be able to measure better than I can that extent, and, at any rate, this hint will be kept secret, for that is, as you will readily see, of the utmost importance.

In M. Deforgues' letter of the fourteenth, and the decree which accompanied it, you will see the reasons assigned for violating the treaty. You will see, also, that it was not from the difficulty of refuting them, that I declined entering into the controversy. In effect, he had acknowledged and lamented to me the impropriety of the decree, but, unable to prevail over a greater influence for the repeal of it, he is driven to the necessity of excusing a step, which it is not possible to justify. There is no use in arguing with those who are already convinced; and, where no good is expected, some evil may follow. I have, therefore, only stated the question on its true ground, and leave to you in America to insist on a rigid performance of the treaty, or slide back to the equal state of unfettered neutrality. Your orders will, of course, be given to me according to the determination, which the President shall take, and until then I hold the matter open.

We have constantly the news of victory, but the public is incredulous. Lately orders were expedited to attack in every quarter; and as this is a measure originating with the government, those who pretend to judge of intelligence beforehand, say, that it must be favorable. There is, at any

rate, the resource of concealing it, and although it would, at first sight, appear next to impossible that, in a country flooded with gazettes, there should be no note of long and bloody battles, yet the severity of the decrees against those who discourage the exertions of the Republic, and the greater severity with which all such decrees are executed, awe the boldest printers, and hush even the whispers of private information. You must not be surprised, therefore, to find in the Dutch and English gazettes the account of actions, which are passed over in silence by those I send you.

It is unfortunate that you are thus disabled from comparing different accounts, and forced to judge from partial recital. The best remaining resource is to contrast the ministerial and opposition prints. Among the persons best informed, it seems to be doubtful, whether the Allies will push on towards the city, or wear away the national resources by warring on the frontiers. The former would have consisted better with a determination to restore the monarchy, and the latter seems to indicate a projected dismemberment.

In the mean time, the expense of blood and treasure to this country is inconceivable. Already artisans and laborers of every kind are extremely rare. The price of mechanics is risen to twelve livres, that of common hands to five livres, and this, notwithstanding the regulation of subsistence to something very near the ancient standard. Manufactures are becoming very dear, and the attempt to limit prices, though enforced by the dreadful guillotine, cannot but produce the reverse of what it is intended for.

The ensuing winter, unless some important changes take place, must be productive of scenes most melancholy and distressing. If the enemy possesses himself of the strong holds along the northern frontier, he will undoubtedly ravage Picardy with his immense cavalry during the winter season, and thus destroy one great granary. The resources of Barbary, Sicily, and Italy are already cut off from the south. The Vendée is in

train to become a desert. The army of the Republic lays it waste with fire and sword. I will not endeavor to paint the various wretchedness, which has been described to me as existing in that quarter. If the war continue another year, the wishes of those who meditate the ruin of France will be so far accomplished, that many years of peace will not be able to restore her wealth and population. This will, I think, be a misfortune to the United States, and in all possible events the present turmoil of Europe will furnish terrible examples to the present age, and to a distant posterity. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

P. S. I have paid four hundred and forty livres for packing up the statue of General Washington. Is this to be charged to the United States? Or will you receive it for me from the State of Virginia?

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, October 19th, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

I had hopes until last evening, that the persons, who are to go out as Commissioners from hence, would have embarked with Captain Culver, but circumstances have delayed the appointment. The plan which was in agitation, and which will probably be carried into effect, is to send over three or four Commissioners, one of whom will be charged with Letters of Credence, but instructed to conform to the directions of the Board. It is probable that the new Minister, immediately on being presented, will ask you to aid in securing the person and papers of the old one. My public despatch of this day contains a remote hint to lead the investigation of the Secretary of State. I did not choose to be more particular, because you can both give and take the informations you think proper.

I have favored, or rather excited the idea of this procedure for the following reasons. First, such a public act will place in a contemptible light the faction connected with M. Genet. Secondly, the seizure of his papers, by exposing his connexions with *prime movers*, will give a lesson to others. And thirdly, the Commissioners who exercise this high handed authority will, on reflection, feel the necessity of respecting your government, lest they should meet a similar fate. Having alarmed their apprehensions, as to the effect which M. Genet's imprudence might produce, and knowing the public and *private* views of the *parties*, I have insinuated the advantage which might result from an early declaration on the part of the new Minister, that as France has announced her determination not to meddle with the interior affairs of other nations, so he can know only the *government* of America. In unison with this idea, I told the Minister that I had observed an overruling influence in their affairs, which seemed to come from the other side of the Channel, and at the same time had traced the intention to excite a seditious spirit in America. That it was impossible to be on a friendly footing with such persons, but that at present a different spirit seemed to prevail. This declaration produced the effect I intended. The Minister has himself the wish to go out to America as Plenipotentiary, and M. Otto, his principal secretary, having the same wish, they will, I believe, endeavor while they stay to put things in good train here.

It may be an important *judicial* question, how far the Minister is protected by the law of nations, after the arrival of his successor. In my opinion the same principles, which exempt him from the municipal law, subject him to the will of his sovereign, and of course the aid given to the new Minister is not an act of the *judiciary* but of the *executive*, performed as an *ally* and *friend*, and is merely *discretionary*. I find that this Commission will endeavor to get hold of the debt from America to France by *anticipation*. If no other reasons militated against the *advance*, the advantage of a pledge to satisfy

damages, which our citizens may sustain during the present violence, is considerable, and will not, I presume, be overlooked. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, October 20th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

I intend to despatch Captain Culver tomorrow morning, and shall give into his charge a box containing three dies of medals, and three boxes containing each one pair of dies. Whether he will be able to take them to you is uncertain, owing to trifling circumstances. I have not yet got the passports for them; and he tells me, that his vessel is in the basin at Havre, consequently must come out at the present full tides, or stay a long time; so that, if I have not the passport in the morning, I will take the chance of sending it after him.

It appears that the French army has forced the Prince de Cobourg to raise the siege of Maubeuge; but he has crossed the Sambre in good order, and perhaps we may soon hear of him again. Be that as it may, the French have experienced a complete defeat in Alsace. The lines of the Lauter have been forced, and they have lost everything. A great part of the army is cut to pieces, and the rest is we know not where.

I have been told that a plot for delivering up Strasbourg has been discovered, and that a great majority of the inhabitants are concerned in it. Also that serious apprehensions are yet entertained for the fate of that city. The advanced period of the season is, however, favorable to the party which is on the defensive in that quarter. November generally brings foul weather there; so that the assailants must, I think, look out for winter quarters instead of pushing into the country. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, November 12th, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

M. de Laforest called just now, while I was at the Minister's, to inform me that he will probably leave Paris tomorrow morning. I, therefore, write this as an *introduction* to you, and proceed to give a hasty sketch of the form in which the business now stands.

A Commission is named, (the appointments not yet gone through the forms,) to consist of four persons. The Minister is M. Fauchet, Secretary of the Executive Council, a young man of about three and thirty, whom I have not yet seen, but he is said to possess genius and information. The Secretary of Legation is M. Leblanc, a man of about fifty, and who was lately at the head of the Police Department in this city. Him also I am, as yet, unacquainted with; but he is mentioned to me as a prudent, sensible man.

M. de Laforest goes out as Consul General, and M. Petrie, his friend and companion, as Consul in the port of Philadelphia. These two will undoubtedly draw together, and will probably sway the conduct of the Commission; for the Minister is to take no important steps without being previously authorised by the Board.

I understand that a kind of etiquette has been established, by which the Consuls, as not being properly diplomatic characters, are not received or invited with the Minister, and I perceive that there is a strong wish to enjoy the exterior respect of office, as well as the solid authority. I cannot pretend to judge, nor even to guess how far anything of this sort consists with the general rules, which you may have found it proper to establish; but, I think, I can perceive that the two Consuls expect to govern the Commission by two means; one, their greater knowledge of our country, laws, and inhabitants; the other, a persuasion to be inculcated on the Minister and Secretary, that they enjoy the confidence of

our government. Perhaps a little vanity may also be for something in the business ; but your judgment will well discern motives, and, therefore, I only give hints.

I think that M. de Laforest and his friend, being men of understanding, will endeavor to keep things in a line of prudence and propriety : therefore, being uncertain, at present, as to the personal characters of the other two, it seems to be well that the Board is to be kept steady by the anchors we are acquainted with, and as the others unfold themselves, it will appear what reliance can be placed on them.

The Minister, in the conference I had with him just now, has again reiterated the assurance, that he and the other members of this government have the most sincere desire to be on the most cordial terms with us, and I am the more disposed to believe in their assurances, because America is the only source, from whence supplies of provisions can be drawn to feed this city, on which so much depends. The coming winter will be, I believe, dreadful, and the spring, should the war continue, must open with partial scarcities, if not general want. To the sufferings, unavoidable from many other causes, no small addition will be made by the laws limiting prices, enforced by the iron hand of necessity. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Sainport, November 16th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

My last was of the twentieth of October. Captain Culver did not, I find, get out of the port of Havre till the first instant. He took with him the medal dies.

The Consul charges me with a balance of nineteen hundred and ninety-three livres, eight deniers, nine sous, telling me, that he thinks, by your letters, that you would choose that he should draw on you, but that it would be very difficult, and therefore

prefers receiving payment from me. I shall accordingly advance this sum ; and, as I understand from Captain Culver that he paid a considerable part of the disbursement for his vessel by dollars sold at twelve livres, I suppose that the owners of the vessel will charge you for the whole, to wit, five thousand seventy-three livres, eight deniers, nine sous, at that rate being one hundred sixty-six dollars and seventy-nine cents. Wherefore, I will carry to the debit of the United States the sum above mentioned at the same rate, being one hundred sixty-six dollars and eleven cents, so that you will owe only two hundred fifty-six dollars and sixty-eight cents to them.

In my last, I had the honor to inform you, that the rate of depreciation had continued nearly about what it was on the twelfth of September, viz. two and a half to three for one. But, since that time, it has been approaching, at first gradually, and now rapidly, to par. When I left Paris, two days ago, gold was at about one and a half, and silver at about one and one tenth. The reason of this difference will go far to explain the phenomenon of a paper money rising in value, while the sum emitted goes on increasing. Gold is more easily concealed than silver. Whatever is discovered *hidden* is confiscated, and that which is not hidden is taken to the treasury, to be paid in Assignats at par *hereafter*.

There is, however, another reason ; the war tax on the rich, added to the other taxes, disables them from placing their contingent of the forced loan, and therefore they are reduced to the necessity of selling what they possess most valuable, and the treasury, which can alone purchase with safety, fixes its own price. If, therefore, louis d'ors should at length be under par, I should not be surprised. The sum of precious metals and materials in the treasury and mint is already very great ; (they say a *milliard*, or forty millions sterling) ; it is, I suppose, exaggerated, but it is daily increasing. And, at the rate things go on, government will have accumulated in the city of Paris all the gold and silver, and a great part of the diamonds, pearls, &c. of France. Of course, they will be in a condition

to dismiss the Assignats from all farther employment, and to begin a new system full handed.

They seem to think that, in this way, provision will be made for two campaigns, and that their enemies, astonished at such an immense resource, will be inclined to treat. A previous difficulty is, however, to be removed ; that is to say, some one person, or some small number of persons, must be named, who shall hold the unlimited power of treating and of executing the treaty. This will, I suppose, be speedily effected. It will remain to be discovered, whether those who are so sanguine, as to the dispositions of some, if not all of the Allied Powers, do not reckon without their host.

I must, by the way, drop one word as to the overthrow of the Catholic religion. It is now expiring under wounds from the true French weapon, ridicule. The people who, five years since, fell down in the dirt as the consecrated matter passed by, now dance the *carmagnole* in holy vestments, and perform other mummeries, which it might seem profane to mention. The late *Fest of Reason* is a very striking feature in the countenance of the revolution. You know the opera girl, Saunier, who is, though very beautiful, next door to an idiot, as to her intellectual gifts. It is said also that she is anything, except what the French call *sage*. It is she, who lately asked the painter, David, to invent for her (to appear in the Ballet of Paris) some dress which should be more indecent than nakedness. And the painter, it seems, had genius enough to comply with her wish. But I speak only from hearsay, not having been at any of the theatres for nearly two years.

Well, Sir, it so happened that this actress, remarkable for fine attitude in dancing, was pitched upon to represent *Reason* in a kind of opera performed at Notre Dame. In the course of it, she stood in the place *ci-devant* most holy, and was there adored on bended knees by the President of the Convention, and other principal characters. At this spectacle, the devout will unquestionably be scandalized, and it seems, in ef-

fect, to be a strong experiment on the national feelings. The burning of legs, and arms, and grinders of saints, male and female, with relics from the wood of the original cross, must have the good effect of undeceiving those, who imagined there were miraculous qualities inherent in those crumbling materials. But the dismissal of all the bishops and curates is a matter of more serious import. A national economy of near four millions sterling will be thereby effected ; but what degree of ferment may be excited by the disbanding of those ecclesiastical regiments, is yet a problem.

I now proceed to state to you the grounds, on which different advocates erect their fabric of probabilities. To begin with those who calculate on the success of France. They say, that along the northern frontier from the ocean to the Ardennes, the campaign is null. That the enemy must winter in his own country, which, not being covered by fortresses or by natural defences, must be open to incursion all winter. That the army in Alsace, if Landau and Strasbourg be not taken, will find it difficult to retreat, and impossible to stay ; so that a *Burgoynade* may ensue. That from the falls of the Rhine to the Mediterranean, the untouched frontier is now guarded by impassable snows in the gorges of the Alps, leaving the republic in quiet possession of Savoy. That Toulon will soon be attacked with such vigor that it must fall. That the Pyrenean mountains now render all attempts on the part of Spain abortive. And that the flame kindled in the Vendée must be speedily extinguished, so that they will be able with undivided energy to oppose, nay attack, their enemies next spring, should they persist in hostility, and hence is adduced the probability of a peace, on such terms as France may dictate.

On the other hand, it is said, that Valenciennes and other adjacent places will cover the heart of Flanders and open that of France. That the sluices, especially in winter, form a sufficient defence for the maritime Flanders, and that a great superiority of cavalry will enable the enemy to lay waste Picardy, as soon as the French troops shall leave the field and go into winter

quarters; that Landau will be taken and Strasbourg surrendered, as it has neither garrison nor magazines; in which case Alsace is irrecoverably lost, and the enemy, who can occupy the passes of the Vosges, will have an easy task to enter Champagne next spring; that in the mountains of Franche Comté a second Vendée is preparing, and waits only the favorable moment to break out; that the Lyonese are impatient under the yoke, to which they have been compelled to submit, and will, of course, take arms whenever an opportunity offers; that Toulon cannot be taken by a *coup de main*, and the same causes, which render the Alps and Pyrenees secure for the French, give like security to Spain, and Sardinia, wherefore their troops can go to Toulon; that a numerous French army cannot long be subsisted there, in as much as the great city of Marseilles was formerly supplied from the coast of Barbary; and thence it is inferred, that, the attempt on Toulon failing, Provence must fall, because the French troops must retire to a more plentiful country, so the duration will cover the possession of the enemy, and enable him to turn his attention towards Cevennes, in which there exists great discontent and strong dispositions for revolt; that should the Franc Comtois engage heartily in the royal cause, the Swiss may be brought into the league, and, pressing towards Lyons as soon as the campaign opens, oblige the French to retire from Savoy, and perhaps to abandon all to the eastward of the Rhone; but at any rate, to hold a precarious possession of it until the troops, which winter in Piedmont, can advance into Dauphiné. I believe that, on almost any hypothesis, it must be admitted that the Dauphinois can dispose of their own country.

It is contended farther, that the insurgents in the Cevennes and Auvergne could easily overrun the country along the Garonne and as far as Bordeaux, because the people are already indisposed, and only kept under by the fear of instant death.

On the Vendée much is said. Fire and sword have been carried through that unhappy country; of course, the proselytes

made will return to their original sentiments, as soon as the incumbent terror is removed. It is here that the strong principle of religious fanaticism is to be calculated on. The future conduct cannot be defined, or even conjectured, on the ground of reason merely human. The firm persuasion, that death in the cause of God gives immediate possession of an endless beatitude, is capable of converting timidity into heroism. Already the effects have been wonderful, and we observe that very few of the men, who have been sent to subdue the Vendée, have ever returned.

A large party, which, at the lowest estimation, is not less than 15,000, have crossed the Loire, and marched into Lower Normandy and Brittany. That in this quarter they will find many congenial spirits is considered as certain, and also that their measures are combined with the British cabinet. At a distance from their home, nothing remains for them but victory or death. It is in this quarter, that the destruction of the Catholic religion is supposed to be most obnoxious. The clergy being driven to despair, it is supposed that such of them as possess personal courage will march in the ranks. The insurgents are commanded by able men; and the troop is composed of the remnant of many battles. Hence it is concluded, that no opposition made to them by the raw levies from Normandy and Brittany can have any effect, and, of course, that the troops in the Vendée must go in pursuit of them. It is averred that in such case, the Vendée would rise, like a Phœnix from its ashes, more formidable than ever. That there is a corps of 12,000 men still remaining on the island of Noirmoutier and that neighborhood, which will come forward immediately and recover all that has been lost and more.

Lastly, it is said, that however splendid may be the financial arrangements, it will be impossible to hold out, unless the people can be taught to eat silver and gold, for that famine already partially felt must become general. This assertion is exaggerated, but I think much distress will be experienced on that account.

Having thus given you the pros and cons, I leave you to make up your judgment. For my own part, I have observed that mankind are generally deceived both by their hopes and by their fears; and I persist in believing, that the fate of so great a country as this must ever depend much more upon interior sentiment, than on exterior operations. As to the operations of the insurgents, who are supposed to have in view either the town of St Malo, or an irruption into Normandy, or a march to Paris, I consider the last as the easiest and safest operation; among other reasons, because it appears most difficult and hazardous. But I do not believe it will be attempted.

The second, which would look like a serious combination to terminate the war, by re-establishing the monarchy, seems to me somewhat beyond the degree of talents, which has hitherto directed the Allies; and, on the whole, I conclude that Britain, looking with an eye of cupidity at the port of Brest, wishes to get possession of St Malo, and extend a defensive line along the Rance and Vilaine rivers, so as to include Lower Brittany, and try what can be done by force and persuasion towards the possession of that country. Whether this be the plan is one question. Whether it will succeed is another. Time will discover the answer to one, and, perhaps, to both. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, November 26th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

In mine of the sixteenth, I omitted to mention the fall of the Brissotin party and of the Duke of Orleans; but it was a thing so much of course, that you had, doubtless, anticipated it.

I mentioned to you that silver was nearly at par. In effect, it is now under par. Crowns, I am told, sell at two per cent discount, and bullion, I know, is at fifty two livres

per marc, and the price for many years preceding the revolution was fifty-four, as I am told. For some days past there has been no foreign exchange. There are no buyers, because the person, who takes a bill, is considered as suspected, and persons suspected are put in prison, and persons in prison are so numerous, that none can get out, because, in the multitude of applications, there is no time to examine any particular complaint.

You will form some more accurate idea of this situation, when I tell you that a young American by the name of Griffith, having lost at Havre my certificate that he was an American citizen, was taken up. I declined interfering for him at first, because I suspected that the certificate had been made use of for some sinister purpose; but, when all matters were cleared up to my satisfaction, I applied to the Minister, and he to the Committee of Safety. I have repeated my applications for a month past, and he has repeated his, and as yet nothing satisfactory is done, although I have no doubt of the disposition of government to give us satisfaction.

They deliberate at present on the means of bringing their system a little more into form, and the Minister tells me that, as soon as that is effected, I shall have less frequent reason to complain, and more speedy and effectual redress. I hope this may be the case, for at present it is terrible.

We have, as Mr Fenwick informs me, ninety-two sail of vessels at Bordeaux. I have formerly mentioned to you the embargo laid in that port. It has, at length, produced the greatest distress. The crews have consumed their provisions. The merchants will be saddled with heavy loss and cost. I have made reiterated applications; but the situation of that city has prevented the *Comité de Salut Public* from a direct interference. The *Commissaires* have persisted in their measure of shutting the port. They promise Mr Fenwick redress from day to day. The Minister cannot promise redress to me, but he promises to try for it, and I believe he does try; but I am sure that it is as yet without effect.

In my last conference on the subject, two days ago, after having advanced the various reasons arising from the justice of the demand, and after stating to him the very great hardship of the case, I hinted the extreme bad policy which would deter any American vessel from coming to France, unless reparation were made. I know not, as yet, the effect; but I am sure that all commerce between this country and America must soon terminate, unless a more regular and orderly system shall soon take place. I expect that all the ports of America will be filled with complaints. And, from what Mr Fenwick writes, I suppose the public servants will be criminated, because France is without a regular government. This, to be sure, is not very just, but it is very natural. A choleric man beats the post, which he has struck his head against. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO M. DEFORGUES.

Translation.

Paris, December 9th, 1793.

Sir,

I had the honor of receiving your letters of the 7th, 14th and 17th instants. I thank you for your attention in expediting the exequatur of the Sieur de la Motte, and in obtaining the liberation of the American citizen, Mountflorenc. Citizen Griffith is still detained.

I receive, every day, letters which present to me the sad picture of what the commerce of the United States suffers at Bordeaux. Our vessels came on the faith of treaties. Some carried provisions there, others went to take as freight, cargoes for the French Colonies, or foreign ports. Many were to return loaded with corn, flour, salt provisions, and other eatables. All are detained there.

I will not repeat to you, Sir, the various observations, which

I have had the honor to make to you at different times on this subject, for the principles of justice are so evident, that it is useless to speak of them. I will only mention, therefore, a motive of a different kind, but yet deserving attention. The advantage, not to say the necessity, of obtaining supplies of provisions for France, from foreign sources, is readily acknowledged. Everything then which opposes this, is prejudicial to the most important interests of the Republic. Now, how can you persuade neutral vessels to enter French ports, when it will be obvious to them that they incur the risk of being detained there? I should ill fulfil my duty, as the representative of a friendly and allied nation, did I not point out to you the danger to which the provisioning of France, and especially the capital, is exposed.

It is true, interest is the moving spring of commercial operations, but the American owners, who have made voyages for France, in preference to the other countries of Europe, have also followed the impulse of feeling, which always influences the judgment, and consequently the calculations. Those of your friends, then, who are most attached to you, are the sufferers from this detention. I leave it to your good sense, Sir, to infer the consequences, and flatter myself that a just indemnification for this detention, and speedy permission to depart, will soon efface the unpleasant impression of the losses, which they have sustained, and that a hundred vessels, which are in the port of Bordeaux, will return loaded with flour, in three or four months, and thwart the designs of those who wish to starve the city of Paris. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, Decémber 12th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

I transmit to you enclosed a letter received open from Mr Cathalan, who has been disappointed in giving the needful

surety for the due execution of his office, by the delay of his letters during the siege of Lyons, and other circumstances resulting from local situation. It seems probable that my correspondence with him may be soon cut off, for if the French army does not speedily get possession of Toulon, I think they will be obliged to abandon the enterprise, from the difficulty of obtaining subsistence. In that case Marseilles will fall of course, as well as the county of Nice, which has already cost much blood and treasure.

The insurgents of Vendée, who had broken into Lower Normandy, seem to have divided themselves into various bands, and to have been attended with a varied success; but, on the whole, the theatre of their operation is considerably extended, and we may hourly expect to hear that they have received considerable reinforcements by sea. I persist in believing that to be the tender part of the French Republic, for many things concur to show, that a very large portion of the people are disposed to a counter revolution; but they dare not stir until a sufficient force shall appear; for they are without arms, or union, or any means of understanding each other, while the examples are so striking and terrifying, that every individual, whatever may be his political tenets, trembles at the exercise of that authority which, whether willingly or unwillingly is a matter of indifference, he contributes to support.

Since my last, the new organization, or rather regulation, of the government system has taken place; but, to my poor conception, it appears as inefficient and as discordant as ever. If I am not mistaken, it must soon undergo farther changes.

I enclose also herein a copy of my letter of the ninth to the Minister, by which you will observe that I endeavor to obtain, by a sense of their own interest, the release of our ships from the harbor of Bordeaux, since the sense of justice has not yet produced the effect. To reason at a distance, and in generals, it would seem almost impossible that this outrageous grievance should be continued; but yet I do not dare to flatter myself with the removal of it. The Representatives of the people

sent into the departments are vested with unlimited power. In the exercise of it they suspend decrees of the Convention, fine, imprison, in short, do everything, which to them appears needful for the public safety. They assign their reasons afterwards, if called on by the Convention for that purpose. But it seems to be understood, that their acts must not be reversed until after their return, unless they should indeed be charged as *contre-revolutionnaires*, and then everything is overturned.

I need not dwell on such a state of things, for you will readily draw all the perplexing and vexatious consequences. Happy they, who contemplate them at a distance. A view of what our countrymen suffer in this respect so torments me, that it is very difficult to be patient. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO M. DEFORGUES.

Translation.

Paris, December 29th, 1793.

Sir,

A letter, which I have just received from the citizen Griffith, informs me that he has been two months in prison, without any charge whatever being exhibited against him. It is a long time since I solicited the liberty of this citizen, with the persuasion of his innocence, but his long detention induces me to apprehend that I may have been mistaken. I pray you, Sir, to favor me with the cause of his detention, that I may render an account of the same to the United States.

Daily complaints are addressed to me from Bordeaux, where the embargo is still in full force. Some exceptions in favor of those vessels, said to be loaded on account of that republic, have produced the effect, which might have been expected. Some, from a principle of respect for the government, suppose that these are individual speculations made on

the general misfortune, in the hope that the markets of the United States, unfurnished in consequence of the embargo, will offer an early and advantageous sale for the cargoes, which have lately been despatched to them. Others insist that the speculations in question are on the account of government, and you may easily conceive the sensations which this idea produces.

However it be, it seems to me necessary on every possible account to remedy the evil as soon as possible. I demand justice for my countrymen from the French Republic, not only from a sense of duty to the United States, but also from regard to France. Be assured, Sir, that your enemies could not mark out for you a course of conduct more to your disadvantage, than that which I have just laid before you.

I have the honor to subjoin to this letter, the copy of a petition sent to me by the American citizen, John Gray. He informs me that on his arrival, on the 13th of December, a guard was placed on board his brig, and that a member of the Committee at Subsistence told him, that he would be personally responsible, if any portion of the rice were discharged, even to nourish his own countrymen. He offered the cargo to this Committee, which referred him to the Committee appointed to purchase goods arriving in neutral vessels. This latter committee told him that they were not provided with the powers requisite to grant to any person whatever the conditions set forth in his petitions, and that he must apply to the representatives of the people in this city. These are too much occupied to pay the least attention to his business. He therefore says to me, as I can sell my cargo neither to the nation, nor to individuals, as I am forbidden to distribute it among my countrymen, who are in a state of extreme suffering, let me at least be permitted to depart, and seek commerce and liberty elsewhere.

You will observe, Sir, in the petition of citizen Gray, that he was informed, during his passage, of the state of things at Bordeaux, and that he decided to continue his route, only in the opinion that the news he received was merely a calumny invented by the enemies of France. I have no doubt that this

intelligence is now spread abroad in America. Judge then whether it be not of moment to efface as soon as possible the impression it may make. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Philadelphia, January 3d, 1794.

Dear Sir,

I have the honor to inform you, that I have resigned the office of Secretary of State, and that Mr Randolph, late Attorney General of the United States, is appointed by the President, and approved by the Senate, as Secretary of State. He will be so good as to acknowledge the receipt of your several letters not yet acknowledged by me, and will answer in detail such parts of them as may require special answer. I beg leave to conclude this last of public correspondence with you, with very sincere assurances of the great esteem and respect, with which I have the honor to be, dear Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant,

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

EDMUND RANDOLPH TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Philadelphia, January 10th, 1794.

Sir,

I do myself the honor of enclosing to you a letter from Mr Jefferson, announcing my succession to him, as Secretary of State. His resignation, which took place on the 31st ultimo, was accompanied with a general regret, founded on his acknowledged qualities for that department, and the important services rendered by his labors.

The only letter, which I find, Sir, from you unanswered, is that of June 25th, 1793. It is thought advisable by the

President to defer all animadversions upon the decree, to which it relates, and indeed upon any of the affairs of France, until the temper of that country towards the United States shall be disclosed by your communications, subsequent to the receipt of Mr Jefferson's letter to you, of the 16th of August, 1793.

The journals and pamphlets, now sent, will inform you of the progress made by Congress on the very interesting subjects, which have hitherto occupied them.

Suffer me to tender to you, on this first occasion of our correspondence, the great and sincere respect, with which I have the honor to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

EDMUND RANDOLPH.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, January 21st, 1794.

Dear Sir,

I do myself the honor to transmit herewith duplicates of mine, of the sixteenth and twenty-sixth of November and twelfth of December. I also enclose copies of my letters of the twenty-ninth of December to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and of his answer; of mine of the fourth of January, introducing the deputation sent up from Bordeaux, and of his of the twenty-sixth of Nivose in reply to it.

The young man, Mr Griffith, whom I mentioned in mine of the twenty-sixth of November, is at length out of prison; but another, of the name of Hoskins, still remains in confinement, and this merely because the multiplicity of business before the Committee prevents them from attending to anything.

I learn that the number of persons arrested in this city amounts to fifteen thousand, and that through the Republic is more than tenfold more numerous. The petitions before them could not be read through in less than a year, supposing ten hours a day appropriated to that purpose; and, as the

arrestations are daily continued, those who are confined are in a sad and hopeless condition.

The wiser part of those, who are at the head of affairs, are sensible that such severe measures must prove injurious, and perhaps fatal; but they dare not appear as the advocates for the unfortunate, lest they should partake of their situation. Late experiments justify their apprehensions, and, if I may judge, the *outs*, who wish to be *ins*, will use this as a lever to overturn the power of their opponents; so that the general gaol delivery, if effected, will come from those who inveigh against, not from those who propose it. The reason is clear. To advocate such a measure exposes to the charge of *Moderatisme*; and you will observe here, that as *Brissotisme* succeeded to *Fayettisme*, which has succeeded to *Aristocratie*, so *Moderatisme* is now heir to all the odium of *Brissotisme*. Robespierre has luckily hit on the term *Ultra-revolutionnaire*, and brought it with good success into the field against the term *Contre-revolutionnaire*; but it seems likely that *Moderatisme* will prove too hard for *Ultra-revolutionnaire*.

I cut short these observations, to give you a sketch of the state of parties. Previous to which, however, lest I should forget it, I must mention, that Thomas Paine is in prison, where he amuses himself with publishing a pamphlet against Jesus Christ. I do not recollect whether I mentioned to you, that he would have been executed along with the rest of the Brissotines, if the adverse party had not viewed him with contempt. I incline to think that, if he is quiet in prison, he may have the good luck to be forgotten. Whereas, should he be brought much into notice, the long suspended axe might fall on him. I believe he thinks, that I ought to claim him as an American citizen; but, considering his birth, his naturalization in this country, and the place he filled, I doubt much the right, and I am sure that the claim would be, for the present at least, inexpedient and ineffectual.

There seems to be at present three parties among the doers of the day; for I except those, who are entirely indisposed to

the government. The one may be called the *Dantonists*, with whom Robespierre is connected, and who wish, by mildness and something like a government of laws, to inspire a sort of attachment to the revolution, apprehending that the people, so often disappointed in the expectations held out to them, may at length, by a kind of general effort, arising not from any particular plot or conspiracy, but from the universal sense of oppression, overturn the whole affair, which, whatever may be its future and national effect, must necessarily occasion their immediate and personal ruin.

The second may be called the *Parisian party*, being those who wish by a new blow from the populace of this city to make a second edition of the piece acted on the 31st of May last, and thereby put themselves in the places of such as may be then sent to the guillotine.

The third may be called the *Ministerial party*, and although the Ministers are, at present, no more than a kind of clerks, subject to the imperative, and too often the imperious, mandates of a Committee, yet as they are supported privately by those who wish to bring forward the Constitution, and as they have the natural advantage of men doing business with Committees, to see how much is sacrificed, and how much neglected, and thence show the great abuses inseparable from that sort of government, they have more weight and consistency, than would, at first sight, be imagined. As the present actors have more energy, as well as more experience, than those who suffered themselves to be elbowed off the stage on the 31st of May, I presume that things will be brought much sooner to a crisis.

There is at present a plot *in petto*, which may, perhaps, blow up the *Dantonists*. I have heard different versions of it, and, therefore, will not give you any of them, because it is well known that matters of that kind undergo many changes before they are exhibited, and, besides, the whole affair may die away; especially if any general danger should oblige the parties to be friends for a month or two longer. Let parties rise

or fall as they may, I do not think the present form of government by Committees can long stand. We have seen such a system fall by its own weight, when exercised on a much smaller scale, and any one who has anything to do with Committees here complains, which is the first step towards their ruin.

The successes of the Republic will give pleasure to all those who are attached to France ; for whatever may be the opinions as to a government, which may undergo yet a dozen changes, it seems to be demonstrable from facts, that the plan of dismemberment, which I long since communicated, really exists, and it is that plan which has foiled the Allies. Admitting what has been asserted by persons in a situation to know the truth, and deeply interested to prove the contrary of their assertion, that nine tenths of the nation are inimical to the government, it is an undoubted truth that ninety-nine hundredths are opposed to all ideas of a dismemberment, and will fight to prevent it. Hence it happens, that so few have joined the enemy on any part of the frontiers, except the inhabitants of Alsace, who have been, in their hearts, Germans; and hence also it happens, that the Vendée has been so vigorous in its operation, as in that quarter they fought simply to restore the ancient government and religion. If the allies had given them aid, God knows what would have been the consequence; but as the clear object, when aid was at length offered, consisted only in possessing themselves of strong holds for their own use, the whole plan has fallen through, and a great number of those poor people have been sacrificed. Exaggerated accounts state the destruction of the human race in that quarter at near a million of souls. It certainly has been very great, though not, perhaps, more than half that number. I am much mistaken if the spirit of revolt be quelled, although, for want of opportunity, it may not again perhaps break out.

Toulon was evacuated rather than taken. Perhaps, if the evacuation had not been decided on, it would have been kept; but certainly the brisk attacks of the French precipitated very

much the measures of the enemies. In my opinion, it was a great blunder not to throw succors into that place ; for, if it had been held a little longer, the French army must have retreated, from the want of subsistence.

In like manner, it is now evident that if Bordeaux, Marseilles, Lyons, and Toulon, had all declared at the same time, instead of showing their evil dispositions one after the other, the whole southern part of France was irrecoverably lost to the Republic. And if the good faith of the enemy had not been suspected, this union of measures would have taken place. I learn, in like manner, that Strasbourg would have been delivered up, if the Emperor had not desired to take it in his own name, instead of that of Louis the Seventeenth. The Allies, not being able to possess themselves of this place, (in which the plan of surrendering was discovered, and its effects prevented,) and failing at the same time in their blockade of Landau, which held out longer than they had calculated, were obliged to retire into winter quarters, and as this could not be unknown to the enemy, of course, they were attacked on all sides, and by a vast superiority of numbers. At first, the French were repulsed everywhere ; but the repetition of attacks, (for there were in the whole between thirty and forty), wearied the defendants, who, by no resource of the military art, could bear up against the bodily fatigue of constant fighting. The physical constitution of the French is more adapted to this service, than perhaps any other on earth. To retreat became necessary, and a retreat once begun, was continued from necessity, because the French kept pouring in fresh supplies of men when opposed, and continued their rapid advance wherever they were victorious. Mayence and Fort Louis could alone stop their pursuit.

They are now taking off everything in the country, which they have possessed themselves of, and in so doing, they form a barrier against themselves ; but what is to them of more importance is, that they form also a barrier against their enemies. On the north, it seems to be determined not to give the Allies

any rest, and the calculation is simple. The soldiers brought from a distance cannot easily be replaced, and by constant fighting they may be destroyed, for their country being open, they have nothing to defend them but posts, which, however strong, may be carried by superior numbers. It is true that every one of the Germans so destroyed, may cost a dozen Frenchmen ; but, it is said that the dozen can be replaced more easily than the one. Mutual plunderings form a part of this warfare. Judge, then, how it must thin the ranks of mankind. I believe that nothing like it has appeared in Europe since the crusades.

The resources of this country, its real resources I mean, are wearing away very fast, and if it be true, as it is said, that the population is already diminished one tenth within the last two years, it will have, at least, this one good effect, that the consumption of provisions must diminish in the same proportion. The fear of famine seems to be general ; and although I flatter myself that its greatest ravages may be avoided, yet I do not readily see how the resistance of the next campaign is to be effected, if the whole force engaged against France should continue its operation.

I am promised daily, that the embargo laid on our ships in the port of Bordeaux shall be taken off, and an indemnification be granted for the losses which it has occasioned. I have never been able to learn why it was laid ; but have some reason to believe, that just ground of suspicion had been given as to the voyages, the cargoes, and even the property of some of the vessels then in that port. The deputation now here is pursuing the affair before the Committees, and will, I trust, be successful, as it had already been resolved on to give adequate redress, and I presume that they will not impair the favorable intentions which existed previous to their arrival.

The ratio between paper and the precious metals remains about the same as it was when I last quoted it. Foreign exchanges have received a sad stroke. Monsieur Cambon had declared last June, that by the first of January the exchange

should be at par. As the measures of policy, on which his prediction was founded, had not met with all the success desired, it became necessary to supply the deficiency by force.

You will learn with some surprise, perhaps, that all the funds belonging to French citizens in foreign countries have been put in requisition. Every man is called on to declare not only his own property abroad, but also that of others, which may have come to his knowledge; the whole under the usual penalty of the guillotine. Such sums as are thus discovered are to be paid for at par, and every one is prohibited from purchasing bills on any pretext whatever. If this measure furnishes the expected resource, which I doubt, it cuts off all future hope. And if it does not furnish a very great resource, there will exist in the national affairs a deficit of serious magnitude, for they must face the demand abroad, or renounce the hope of supplies from thence, and on the expectation of such supplies depends the hope of avoiding in this city the evils of want, if not of absolute famine.

It is a long time since I had the honor to mention to you Mr Francis Coffyn, acting at Dunkirk as Consul of the United States. This worthy man's interference in the affair of the Little Cherub (which, by the bye, remains yet undecided) has, through the intrigues of those concerned in the privateer, been the occasion of putting him in prison as a suspected person. The ground of which suspicion is, the having corresponded with Calonne, while Minister on the affairs of the town of Dunkirk, which had, it seems, some demand on the court. I have, in his absence, desired his son to attend to the affairs formerly in the hands of his father, and as he is a man of business, and by no means deficient in understanding, I trust that he will be able to conduct them well.

I cannot, however, avoid repeating my wish, that Consuls, and Vice Consuls were appointed everywhere, for there is great need of them. It would have been happy had some one been named in this city as Consul, or by any other name or title, who might have followed up the Committees, waited day

after day in their ante-chamber and the like, so as to plague them into decisions. The Ministers, as I have already mentioned, stand in such a situation that they dare not push the Committees very hard. You will easily see, that I cannot quit the regular line of application through the channel the government has thought proper to institute for the purpose. And, indeed, besides the impropriety of putting off the character of Minister to put on that of *intrigant*, or at best of a solicitor, I know that it would be a useless, as well as pernicious sacrifice of the national dignity.

I have been requested by some to name a person for that purpose; but I have many objections to that measure, among which it is no small one that I have not the right to do it; and, moreover, the state of things has long been, and still continues to be so critical, that every man, having even the shadow of a public character, is liable to the danger of compromising himself every instant. Hitherto, therefore, I have left every one to choose his own agent for the conduct of his business, because the blame, which must inevitably fall, will then lie on the individual. I say that blame must fall, because those at a distance, judging only from appearances and from professions, form golden expectations, and imagine that nothing more is necessary, in order to realize them, than to bring forward something in the shape of an American. Facts are very different from such appearances.

I suppose that the new Minister has, or shortly will have arrived at Philadelphia. I did not see him, for just as he went away, I was forced by one of the Committees into a dispute, which put them all out of humour, although they were soon sensible they were wrong. It is not worth while to go into the history of it, because the affair is blown over, and because the conduct of men in the midst of a revolution is not to be judged so severely as under a regular government.

It is a long time since I learnt the attack of the Algerines, but as I knew that advices had been sent off to you, I did not

mention it, not having then an immediate opportunity. I shall have occasion to say something on the subject shortly. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Paris, February 5th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

In a newspaper of this day I find the translation of your message of the fifth of December to Congress, and observe, that after stating the violation of the treaty by a decree of the National Convention, you tell them I have been instructed to make representations on the subject.

Now this, my dear Sir, is the first I hear, and all I know of such instructions. Indeed I have received no letters, newspapers, or other intelligence from America, since those which Captain Culver brought. I suppose this arises from the difficulty of communication; but whatever be the cause, I feel the effect. It would be of some use if a clerk in the office of Foreign Affairs had by triplicates mentioned from time to time which of my letters were received. Thus on the present occasion, I should know whether my correspondence with the Minister on the subject of this obnoxious decree was before you.

As it is, not being able to determine the nature of the representations, which you have desired me to make, I am obliged to be silent. And unless more than one copy has been sent, I may never receive your orders, and at any rate it will be at no early day. I am sure it is superfluous to tell you, how painful it is for a person in my situation to be totally ignorant of what passes in his own country, and whether the conduct which, under circumstances continually changing, he finds it necessary to pursue, does, or does not consist with the views of government. Blaming a wrong step would prevent

a repetition of it ; but really at present I walk in the dark, or at best by the feeble light of my own conjectures.

I know not whether my brethren have the same dearth of intelligence. Mr Short complained of it much when I last saw him, and has since mentioned the same thing from Madrid, so that I conclude the evil to arise from the negligence of those to whom letters are entrusted. Might it not be advisable to send every month a small packet to Europe? They might come alternately to Havre and Lisbon, and that which arrives at Lisbon come on thence to Havre, that which arrives at Havre go from thence to Lisbon. In this way a regular correspondence would be kept up, and by seizing for important communications the private conveyances which offer, full intelligence would be given and received. Six packets would be amply sufficient for the service, and if, as I believe, small schooners could be safely employed, the prime cost would not be above three thousand pounds sterling, and the annual expense, I should suppose, not more than half of that sum.

I beg your pardon, my dear Sir, for troubling you with this groaning epistle. I will not say one word of news, as in supposable circumstances it might prevent this letter from reaching you. I adhere to the opinions expressed in my last. Adieu.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO M. DEFORGUES.

Translation.

Paris, February 14th, 1794.

Sir,

Thomas Paine has just made application to me, to claim him as a citizen of the United States. The following, I believe, are the facts with regard to him. He was born in England; becoming afterwards a citizen of the United States, he gained great celebrity there, by his revolutionary writings. In

consequence, he was adopted as a French citizen, and then chosen a member of the Convention. His conduct from that time has not come under my cognizance. I am ignorant of the cause of his present detention in the prisons of Luxembourg; but I pray you, Sir, if any reasons with which I am unacquainted oppose his liberation, to have the goodness to inform me of them, that I may communicate them to the government of the United States. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO JAMES DONATUS LERAY.

Instructions.

Paris, February 22d, 1794.

Sir,

The government of this country having resolved, in execution of the eighth article of the treaty of amity and commerce, concluded between the United States of America, and his most Christian Majesty, on the sixth day of February, 1778, to employ their good offices with the Regency of Algiers, to bring about a treaty of peace, have desired me to nominate and appoint some person on the part of the United States, to be present and assist at the negotiations to be had and made for that purpose; and, you having consented to undertake that office, I have by a commission of this day authorised you to negotiate and conclude such treaty on the part of the United States of America. It becomes necessary, therefore, to explain to you my situation, and thence, as well as from the circumstances of the moment, to deduce rules for your government.

And, first, you are to know that my appointment of you is a mere assumption of power on my part, no such authority being given to me as that which is implied in your commission. I act on this occasion upon the principle, that where great public interests are concerned, and when, from the nature of

the case, it is impossible that the will of the government can be seasonably expressed, the confidential servants of the public are in duty bound to imply that will. But your good sense will show you, that by reason hereof, a more critical degree of responsibility is incurred. And hence results two rules for your guidance.

1. Avoid as much as possible all interference, leaving the business to the agents of this government, and only advising with them, so as to secure to the utmost the interests of the United States, in the treaty which they may be able to conclude.

2. In any such treaty, whether you do, or do not, appear as a Commissioner, take care that it be limited to a short period, (such, for instance, as one year,) unless approved by the United States. Such approbation to be expressed by the President of the said States, agreeably to the Constitution thereof.

I give you herewith a copy of the treaty concluded between the United States and the Emperor of Morocco, which will serve as a model or groundwork for you to go by. I expect that the Regency of Algiers will be exorbitant in their demands of money, as heretofore they have been; and I presume that some unfriendly European powers (I might say unchristian powers) may endeavor to counteract you; the rather, as I am informed, that a British Consul in that quarter has declared that America will never obtain a treaty with Algiers, but through the medium of his government. It is proper, therefore, that the business be conducted with the utmost secrecy, and that you appear, what by birth you are, a Frenchman, at least until some good purpose can be answered by the exhibition of your true character and country. It will be useful to inculcate on your companions the same secrecy, which I have just requested you to preserve.

The method by which, as far as I can learn, a treaty has hitherto been avoided, and which may perhaps be still pursued is, by demanding of the United States a sum of money out of

all proportion to the object. And as far as it has come to my knowledge, the disposition of America is divided between the obtaining such treaty by purchase or by force. We have heard, I know not with what truth, that the United States are fitting out thirty frigates. Be it as it may, the report can be turned to account on the present occasion. It may be insinuated to the Dey and his Ministers, that the United States will send a fleet into the Mediterranean manned with the best seamen in the world, (for such the seamen, natives of America, unquestionably are,) with orders to cruise continually and intercept all vessels whatever going to or coming from the port of Algiers. That with this fleet are to be connected some light armed schooners, and a body of riflemen hunters, whose skill, whose activity, and whose courage are unequalled; that this armament will be directed to rendezvous in the port of Malta, in order to commence their operations.

It will be proper to state the greatest amount of all their captures from the United States, since the year 1783 to the present hour, and, without making any deductions therefrom for the expense of the armaments against our commerce, (and which would probably exceed the value of the prizes,) divide the same by ten for the number of years. It will then appear of how little value is the object, even could it be longer pursued without risk or inconvenience. It will appear that, if the whole amount had gone into the Dey's coffers, he would not be much benefitted thereby, and he should be made to observe, that if the Americans pursue their plan, and obtain, as they may, subsidies from the Italian States and others, their armaments will cost *them* nothing, and he will lose the sum he now receives for preserving peace with those States.

The United States have less shipping than is needful to carry their produce, and the latter increases faster than the former; so that they can easily forego the commerce of the Mediterranean, seeing that they would then be unable to get back, of course they could take nothing from us, and would lose much by engaging with us.

From what I have just said, you will see that it is my object to obtain a peace with the smallest possible sacrifice of money, for nothing, if you can. But whether a treaty be, or be not, made, it will be proper to get back the unfortunate men who are captives in that country. If a peace be obtained, their release should be one article of it. If not, you must contrive to get them away for as little money as possible. And it would be well to obtain such passports as may carry them home, lest they should be intercepted in their return.

Before I conclude, it is proper to mention the expense to be incurred on this occasion ; and this I divide into two parts, national and personal. This government will make due provision for the former, and it must be your object to confine it within narrow bounds. It is true that neither you nor I can incur any responsibility in relation to that object, because I have fully expressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs my total want of authority ; and, consequently, their acts are purely their own ; but, still, as the United States will be under a kind of honorary obligation to discharge the debt, which may thus be incurred, it is our duty to render it as light as possible.

As to your personal expense, I will pay it, and I pray you to be as economical as circumstances will permit ; for I must again repeat to you, that, having no authority to act, if my conduct should be disapproved, it is but just that the cost be defrayed by me.

And now, Sir, I commit you to your own understanding and discretion, of which you have a plentiful share, and to the protection of God. If you succeed, as I hope and believe you will, I doubt not you will receive the grateful acknowledgements of America. My thanks are already due for the readiness with which you have undertaken this task, which is by no means a pleasant or agreeable one. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO M. DEFORGUES.

Translation.

Paris, February 27th. 1794.

Sir,

The Captains of American vessels brought into your ports, and persons interested in the said vessels and their cargoes, address to me very serious complaints, which seem but too well founded.

I will not here examine the measure itself, excusable perhaps on account of the extraordinary circumstances in which the Republic is placed. But even could severe necessity justify a violation of the rights of a neutral and allied nation, she ought, at least, to expect to suffer only the inevitable grievances arising from this violation. She has a right to expect, that the French Republic will be so much the more liberal and prompt in making compensation for these forced supplies, as the method by which she took possession of them was uncommon.

But I see with regret that those who, sailing for France, had the misfortune to be carried into England, have had less cause of complaint, than those who have been brought into the ports of the Republic. Here delays and expense consume the whole. Some of the American vessels have been retaken, but the Captains, kept with part of their crews, on board the French vessels, which had captured them, have not been informed of their recapture until their arrival in some port of the Republic, where for months they have solicited indemnification, assistance, means of subsistence, and permission to depart. I am sorry to add that all their solicitations have been fruitless. The Captains Florence, Donavan, and Benjamin Rogers, carried into Brest by the ship *l'Impétueux*, Captain l'Eveque, are in this predicament.

Many vessels and American cargoes, among others the cargo of the Danish ship, *le Krageroc*, are in the same port, and I am told, that there is no one there, authorised by the

Republic, to treat for the cargoes, to pay the freight of the vessels, or to fix the indemnification, which the aggrieved persons think they have a right to demand. Thus the unfortunate men captured at sea, by the ships of an allied nation, and carried prisoners into her remote ports, find themselves, although without means and almost destitute of resources, obliged to undertake a long and expensive journey to obtain that justice, which at least can only be rendered to them in the ports which they have left, since it is there that the articles must be proved, and their prices regulated according to their quality.

I hope, Sir, that the most precise orders will be despatched to remedy these grievances, and that you will soon enable me to give a satisfactory account of them to the American Government. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Sainport, March 6th, 1794.

Dear Sir,

My last was of the 21st of January. I am still without any advices from you since your letters by Captain Culver, which I attribute to the interruptions, to which all communication with this country is exposed, and which for that, among many other reasons, I much lament. Amid the political storms which vex this hemisphere, the opinion of the United States is the polar star, which should guide my course, but which is totally concealed from my view.

Hoskins, whose imprisonment I mentioned in my last, has been liberated. I mentioned also that there had been some feeble attempts to adopt lenient measures, and substitute a government of law to the present system; but hinted, at the same time, my apprehension that they would prove unsuccessful. You will see by the late decree that this apprehension was well founded, and that entire reliance is placed on se-

verity and the resulting fear. This may perhaps succeed, but is exposed to a double danger. First, it facilitates the intrigues and the operations of the foreign enemy, by exciting attachment to the former, and aversion to the present government; and, secondly, it breaks the minds of the people, and prepares them for an abject submission to an usurper, should any such arise in the course of successful war, either civil or foreign.

I have mentioned Mr Paine's confinement. Major Jackson, who, by the bye, has not given me a letter from you, which he says was merely introductory, but left it with the *Comité de Sûreté Générale* as a kind of letter of credence, Major Jackson, relying on his great influence with the leaders here, stepped forward to get Mr Paine out of gaol, and, with several other Americans, has presented a petition to that effect, which was referred to that Committee and the *Comité de Salut Public*. This last, I understand, slighted the application as totally irregular; and some time afterwards Mr Paine wrote me a note, desiring I would claim him as an American, which I accordingly did, though contrary to my judgment, for reasons mentioned in my last. The Minister's letter to me of the first Ventose, of which I enclose a copy, contains the answer to my reclamation. I sent a copy to Mr Paine, who prepared a long answer, and sent it to me by an Englishman, whom I do not know.

I told him, as Mr Paine's friend, that my present opinion was similar to that of the Minister, but I might, perhaps, see occasion to change it, and in that case, if Mr Paine wished it, I would go on with the claim, but that it would be well for him to consider the result, that if the government meant to release him they had already a sufficient ground; but if not, I could only push them to bring on his trial for the crimes imputed to him; seeing that, whether he be considered as a Frenchman, or as an American, he must be amenable to the tribunals of France for his conduct while he was a Frenchman, and he may see in the fate of the Brissotins that to which he is exposed. I have

heard no more of the affair since ; but it is not impossible that he may force on a decision, which, as far as I can judge, would be fatal to him ; for, in the best of times, he had a larger share of every other sense than of common sense, and lately the intemperate use of ardent spirits has, I am told, considerably impaired the small stock, which he originally possessed.

The plan communicated to you of a requisition on all bankers, merchants, and others, to furnish bills for their funds abroad, and receive payment in Assignats at par, has totally failed, as might have been supposed. It was the boy in the fable who killed the goose which laid golden eggs. As a succedaneum, they have obliged the same people to execute joint and several obligations (*billets solidaires*) payable to the bearer for fifty millions of livres, say a forced loan of two millions sterling. These are to be negotiated in foreign countries, and the nation agrees to take them up again hereafter. What is somewhat extraordinary is, that a few of the monied men seem to believe in the success of this measure ; but I own I can scarcely conceive of it, for if foreigners believe in the ultimate success of the Republic, and in the integrity of her future government, the intervention of private credit would be unnecessary ; and, if not, it must be useless ; because, should the Republic be overturned, the plea of duress, by the individuals who have signed, must defeat all hope of recovery ; and because, if the Republic succeeding, should be deficient in her integrity, the individuals would be of course covered by law against all judicial pursuit. Add to this, that there is a kind of absurdity in signing such obligations, by which the richest man binds himself for four times as much as he is worth. On this pin, however, is suspended, for the present, all hope of facing numerous and pressing engagements for indispensable supplies from abroad.

I told you in former letters, that I apprehended a great scarcity of food for the present, or rather the coming campaign, should the Allied Powers persist in their hostility.

They do persist, though the King of Prussia, taking advantage of circumstances, insists on being paid for the blood of his subjects. Food is already very scarce. Flesh is hardly to be obtained in Paris, and the drought of last summer reduced the crop of garden produce so low, that it is now nearly exhausted, and no great addition to be expected for three long months.

You, who know the abundance of former times, will perhaps form a better judgment by price than by description. Take therefore, as a sample, cabbages twenty-four sous, and carrots eight sous a piece, and other things in proportion; sea fish are reduced in quantity, by reason of the war and the total want of flesh on the sea coast, to a degree incredible. For instance, the wealthiest families in Rouen, Havre, &c. are obliged for many succeeding days to content themselves with two or three pounds of very bad salt pork, half a pound of bread each, and such few vegetables as they can procure. The distant departments have many of them been at short allowance for three months past; others for a shorter period; and Paris has been supplied as long as possible. But the resources for flesh being at an end, the bulk of the inhabitants must soon come to bread alone. Now supposing a very doubtful fact, that the magazines of corn are sufficient for common times, and that no difficulty be experienced in the manufacturing and transportation, yet, as the consumption of that article must be increased by the want of all others, very serious evil is to be apprehended. As I write, I recollect some other articles of price, which during my late residence in Paris I heard mentioned. Eggs ten sous each, and salted herrings the same price. These last were the only things, which the poor could get the day before I left town, viz. the first of March, and these bad. Pulse is at thirty sous a quart.

The enemy is collecting himself for an immense effort on the northern frontier. The troops of the Republic have long been assembling in the same quarter. Will the supplies be

sufficient for the army and for the capital? That is a question of serious magnitude. If Paris runs resty, the revolution is done. If the army disbands, the game is equally over. And such events have taken place since the government adopted terror for its maxim and support, that if once that terror were, by superior force, to receive a counter direction the *Ancien Régime*, or any other Régime, would, I think, be submitted to without the slightest struggle.

The Vendée, so often and so totally destroyed in *reports made to the Convention*, seems still to exist, and to wait for the meditated descent from Great Britain, to break out with more violence than ever. If the royalists should again collect an army in that quarter, I believe it will become on both sides a war of extirpation. Torrents of blood have been already shed there, and, if the accounts from thence be not greatly exaggerated, another campaign like the last would convert the whole country into a desert. Barrère, in assigning at the bar of the Convention the causes of the present scarcity, said, that *the Vendée, which used to furnish Paris market weekly with six hundred large beeves, now wants provisions!*

I have often had occasion to mention the embargo laid at Bordeaux, and the sufferings of our countrymen consequent upon it. I have also mentioned the arrival of a deputation from that port to solicit the business in Paris. The day preceding their arrival the Minister told me, that everything should be settled to my satisfaction in two or three days. The deputation, to whom I communicated this intelligence, seemed very apprehensive lest their claims for damages should be referred to persons on the spot, which I own appeared to me both fair and natural; but they assigned reasons against it, which were satisfactory to themselves, and as they were determined to have everything adjusted in their own way, and were well convinced that their representations must have the desired effect; as they seemed, moreover, to be filled with suspicions of Mr Fenwick, which seemed to me ill founded, and therefore very liable to adopt them in respect to any other

of the public servants, I thought it best to leave the business to their own management. I asked them, therefore, what they wished me to do, after having shown them what had already been done. They hesitated a little, as is usual when men have not thought of any course of procedure before they begin to act. They desired an introduction to the Minister, which I immediately gave, and they went to him next day, but came back much out of humor. They afterwards presented a petition to the Convention, which was referred to the *Comité de Salut Public*, and there the affair seems to have ended, for all their urgency to that Committee has not got them one inch forward.

I apprehend that they may have injured their own claim, by interfering unnecessarily in other matters; one instance of which I shall presently have occasion to mention. They have at length called on me to make new demands, declaring their intention to abandon the property of their vessels. I expected that they would have gone back, but find that they determine to remain still longer in Paris, which may, I fear, prove detrimental.

However, on the twenty-seventh of last month, the day after I received their letter, I wrote to the Minister on the subject. I send herewith a copy of my letter, with one of the same date respecting the vessels and cargoes brought in by French frigates, contrary not only to our own treaty, but to every principle of the law of nations. These captures create great confusion, must produce much damage to mercantile men, and are a source of endless and well founded complaint. Every post brings me piles of letters about it from all quarters, and I see no remedy. You have a copy of the Minister's answer to my letter, holding out the hope of a speedy decision; but it may be very long before it can be obtained. And, in the mean time, if I would give way to the clamors of the injured parties, I ought to make demands very like a declaration of war.

What am I to do in such cases? It is impossible for me to

guess the intentions of government, and indeed, Sir, the responsibility is great and distressing. Our countrymen here find, that it is the easiest thing in the world to carry any point with the Committees, *until they have tried*. In the mean time, I am exposed to their clamors in this country, and most probably to their censures in my own, for not performing impossibilities. In order to complete the business, nothing more is necessary, than that the rulers of this Republic, wearied with my complaints, should apply for my recall, in order to get rid of a troublesome fellow. I think it is very likely to happen, if it be not already done. I beg your pardon, Sir, for saying so much of myself, but it is a troublesome thing to navigate in the dark between Scylla and Charybdis, without chart or compass.

I send you enclosed the copy of a letter I received on the fifth of last month from a number of Americans here, (including therein some of the Bordeaux deputation,) with a copy of my answer of the sixth. I sent copies of both to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and called on him shortly after to mention several things, some of which I have already noticed. Among them was the long depending affair of the Laurens, at Havre, and the decrees made *in her case* violating our treaty. I took occasion then to mention again, what I had said in answer to the letter from my countrymen, viz. that I was in hourly expectation of instructions respecting those decrees. I told him that, until they arrived, I should forbear any formal application; but, under the existing circumstances, I would in a friendly manner take leave to express some single idea; that, if the government meant to abide by the treaty, they had better anticipate the arrival of those instructions, and by a voluntary step preserve an air of dignity and good faith. But if, on the contrary, they meant to persist in the violation, then it would be well to consider the events likely to take place, and to provide for them in season. He felt much obliged by this mode of treating the affair, and told me that the thing was already before the Committee in the case of the Laurens, and

that he would endeavor to procure a speedy and satisfactory decision.

You will find herein the report made by Jean Bon St André, which is fully confirmatory of the treaty. Some little matters (errors) of form have impeded the execution of the final decision, and the communication which he is to make to me; but I thought it a proper moment to bring forward the case of the *Enterprise*, which is the subject of the above mentioned letter from Ingraham and others to me. I, therefore, having previously concerted measures with the Minister, prepared a short petition from Captain Ingraham to the *Comité de Salut Public*, as an appeal from the decision of the Executive Council, and sent it to the Minister, who forwarded it to the Committee, and intends to support before them the principles of the petition, and labor for a reversal of the judgment.

I send you enclosed the copy of my letter to the Minister of the 22d of last month, respecting the imprisonment of our Vice Consul at Havre, and of his answer. I shall pursue this business to obtain his liberation. Poor Coffyn is still confined.

While on the subject of violations of personal liberty, it is proper to communicate a step, which late circumstances induced me to take. I have already hinted at a little dispute I had with the *Comité de Sûreté Générale*. It arose about the arrest of a person in my house. Particular reasons prevented me from pushing the matter to a serious issue then. I shall perhaps, take occasion to communicate them hereafter, when I am sure of my conveyance. The Committee were made sensible that they had done wrong, and that was all which I thought necessary.

They have since (though not towards me) gone greater lengths, by arresting the *Chargé d'Affaires* of Malta. This rendered it proper to make a more pointed animadversion on their conduct, and produced the enclosed pieces of the 27th of February. The Minister's answer of the eleventh Ventose is also enclosed, and I find by the gazettes, that on the report of

the *Comité de Salut Public* a decree has been passed in the premises, of which I have not yet received communication from the Minister.

The *Comité de Salut Public* and the *Comité de Sûreté Générale* are not, I am told, on the best terms together, and will probably come to something more overt than words ere long. It is of little importance under what forms parties or factions may present themselves; their real origin is in the political form of the society; and if anything prevents their rage, it must be the situation of Foreign Affairs. It is supposed that the approaching famine will be the signal for hostilities between the contending parties; but it would seem not over prudent in any man, or set of men, to aim at power under present circumstances. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Sainport, March 7th, 1794.

Dear Sir,

Shortly after the intelligence of hostilities by the Algerines, I applied to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, as being interested in putting a stop thereto, in order to cover the arrival of provisions in our ships. It was agreed that the Republic should, in conformity to our treaty, endeavor to obtain a treaty for us with the Algerines. But as it was uncertain whether the Dey would negotiate such treaty with the agents of France, I was desired to name one for the United States.

I therefore stated my want of power; but it being impossible to get a seasonable answer from America to letters on the subject, I agreed to make the appointment of a person, who should come forward in case of necessity. I accordingly have sent M. James Leray, a naturalized citizen of America, to accompany the French Commissioners. He will appear as a Frenchman, unless circumstances call for the production

of his powers. My instructions to him, after stating my want of authority, are, in substance, to aid in obtaining the best possible treaty for the smallest possible sum, and to confine the duration thereof to one year, unless approved of by the President, and to procure the liberation of our captivated fellow citizens.

The French Commissioners are not yet gone, though it is now two months since everything was agreed on. Such are the delays, which result from the disorganized state of affairs in this country. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Sainport, March 13th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

I send you herewith a duplicate of my last letter, in the close of which I mention my adherence to the opinions expressed in my last. But on recurring to my private letter book, which was not then before me, I find that the letter I there alluded to was written on the eighteenth of October. It went by Captain Culver, and has, I hope, arrived in due season. Every day confirms what is contained in that letter; but parties are so balanced, and the impending force from abroad is in such threatening attitude, that the present state of things drags on its existence rather from surrounding circumstances than from internal vigor. And strange as it may seem, the impending change may arise from a victory, or from a defeat, or from a famine.

The gazettes tell us that Mr Jefferson is coming to Europe; some of them say as my successor; others say it is a secret mission. I have heard it said that he is to negotiate a peace among the belligerent powers. For my own part, I hold in politics the opinions which prevail in physics among sound philosophers, viz. that it is proper to determine facts before we

attempt to discover causes. I wait therefore patiently the event. Major Jackson, who has been here for some time, gave me two successors ; first, Mr Bingham, and then Mr Pinckney ; giving in the latter case Mr Pinckney's place to Mr Bingham. So it is easy, you see, to fill up vacancies.

The probable events of the campaign about to open, are not favorable to the French Republic. It will be extremely difficult for them to subsist the armies needful for their defence, and the extreme severity exercised by the present government will, in case of adverse events, excite a universal insurrection. At present, the people are restrained by fear from showing any sentiment unfavorable to the existent authorities, but as is usual in like circumstances, should that fear be removed, it will be succeeded by sharp resentments. If, however, the armies of the Republic should prove successful, they would, in my opinion, be the first to overturn the Convention ; for such is the usual course of things. A terrible perspective this, my dear Sir, for those who are at present in the saddle ; no wonder, therefore, if they ride hard. It is not the least of their misfortunes to be fully sensible of their situation ; and it results therefore, that as much time is consumed in providing for their defence against adverse factions and contingent events, as in preparing for the general defence of the country ; more perhaps.

How different was our situation in America. Every one performed cheerfully his part, nor had we anything to apprehend but from the common enemy. Such is the immense difference between a country which has morals, and one which is corrupted. The former has everything to hope, and the latter everything to fear.

Adieu, my dear Sir ; may God in heaven bless, and preserve, and prosper you.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Sainport, April 10th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

In a letter, which I had the honor of writing to you on the 10th of January, 1793, I gave you some traits respecting Mr Westermann, and as my public despatches had already communicated the plans of Danton, you will not have been surprised at what has lately happened to them. I wrote to you on the 25th of June, that those who ruled had just ideas of the value of popular opinion. Also, that should they reach a harbor, it would be as much by good luck, as by good management, and that at any rate, part of the crew would be thrown overboard. Those I had then particularly in view were Chabot and company, of which company a part still exists.

On the eighteenth of October, I gave you a short view of the nature of the then government, and added what seemed to be the probable termination. I therein observed that, whether France would pass to that point through the medium of a Triumvirate, or other small body of men, seemed as yet undetermined; but that I thought it most probable she would. At that period things were wound up very high, and ever since the utmost uncertainty has prevailed, as to the stroke which would be given.

I enclose herein a copy of what I wrote on the twelfth of last month, since which, both the Dantonists and Hebertists are crushed. The fall of Danton seems to terminate the idea of a Triumvirate. The chief, who would in such case have been one of his colleagues, has wisely put out of the way a dangerous competitor. Hence it would seem, that the high road must be laid through the *Comité de Salut Public*; unless, indeed, the army should meddle. But as to the army, no character seems as yet to have appeared with any prominent feature; neither is there so much discipline as would give an aspiring character just ground of hope. It is a wonderful

thing, Sir, that four years of convulsion, among four and twenty millions of people, has brought forth no one, either in civil or military life, whose head would fit the cap which fortune has woven.

Robespierre has been the most consistent, if not the only consistent. He is one of those of whom Shakspeare's Cæsar speaks to his frolicsome companion, 'He loves no sports as thou dost, Anthony.' There is no imputation against him for corruption. He is far from rich, and still farther from appearing so. It is said that his idol is ambition; but I think that the establishment of the Republic would, all things considered, be most suitable to him. Whether he thinks so is another question, which I will not pretend to answer, nor how far such establishment may appear to him practicable. If it be supposed that a man in his situation should absolutely despair of the Republic, and have so much diffidence either in his abilities or his influence, as to despair also of obtaining, much less of preserving the supreme power, then it might be supposed that Danton's plan would be by such person carried into execution. Yet all this supposition is but conjectural foundation of new conjecture.

And what are the Allies about? Forming schemes to be executed, if they should continue to be Allies. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH, SECRETARY OF STATE.

Sainport, near Paris, April 15th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

This letter will accompany the duplicate of my last to Mr Jefferson, of the 6th of March. Be so kind, I pray you, as to let me know which of my letters are missing. I presume there must be great chasms in my correspondence, as I have received the acknowledgement of very few of my letters; and yet I have written always by duplicates, frequently by triplicates and quadruplicates.

Permit me, my dear Sir, to congratulate you on your appointment. It is honorable to you, and will, I believe, be useful to the United States. The more so, as your convictions respecting our form of government will restore that harmony to our Executive departments, a want of which gave much pleasure to the enemies of America. I flatter myself also, that your habits of attention to business will produce a more active correspondence with the public servants abroad.

Mr Jefferson desired me some time ago to mark the state of depreciation to him; which I continued to do, but omitted in my last, because it continued nearly in the same situation as when I last communicated it. The fact is, that there is now no certain or steady rate, because, as you will see by the gazettes, dealers in that business are frequently guillotined. There is no foreign exchange, and in purchases very little, if any, allowance would be made on payments in specie; and yet bullion is higher than it was before the Assignats were issued. The exact rate I do not know. Louis d'ors, I am told, are much higher than they were, owing, as I have formerly mentioned, to the greater facility of concealing or transporting them.

I have long since pointed out the danger of something very like a famine, which has indeed in many parts put on its most distressing forms. Men have literally expired for the want of food, with the means of buying it in their possession, could it have been bought. Luckily, or rather providentially, the season advances with a rapidity scarcely ever experienced. I have rye in the ear, and sanfoin in blossom. It is true, that the sandy soil contributes to push forward vegetation; but still it is a phenomenon. Apricots as large as a pigeon's egg in the middle of April, and that in the latitude of forty-eight to forty-nine. These facts, which, in common cases, would be more properly communicated to an agricultural society than to a Minister of State, are of vast importance, for the great bulk of this nation live chiefly on vegetable substances; and in the south, where the scarcity was greatest, I presume, from what

I see here, that the earth begins to furnish a tolerable support to its inhabitants. A frost, such as we experienced in the end of last May, would do more towards the starvation system, than all the armies and fleets in Europe.

In my last, I mentioned that the King of Prussia persisted in the alliance, although he intended to be paid for his efforts. I am still of the same opinion, though it is confidently asserted that he means to withdraw, leaving only his contingent as a co-estate of the Empire. His past conduct gives no room to suppose, that a sacred regard to engagements taken would prevent him from abandoning his allies; but I think there is the stronger tie of a common interest. Austria and England, particularly the latter, are more pointedly interested than he. I conclude, therefore, that the business will wind up by a good round subsidy, (perhaps a million sterling,) and in consequence of it a very large body of Prussian troops added to the army in Flanders.

By garrisoning a few posts along the Rhine, and leaving the country exposed to incursion, the allies will force the German militia to defend themselves; and as to the ravages which may be committed, a few consolatory phrases will, perhaps, be the only compensation, which the sufferers will ever receive. If this conception of the business be just, the Prussian Cabinet will keep up the idea, that it means to recall its armies, until the last moment, and those armies will then turn off to the left into the Low Countries, or perhaps be transported by water. Something or other of an extraordinary nature is in agitation on both sides, for the armies have been long looking at each other, without striking or even aiming a blow. I have no doubt but the Allies count on the public discontents here, and certainly they have some foundation; but as, on their side, there is no one chief who can act decisively, or form solid engagements for the whole alliance, it is not possible to take that advantage of those discontents, which certainly would not escape the intelligent mind of a Cæsar or an Alexander.

In the course of my correspondence with your predecessor, I have endeavored to communicate to him my views of men and things, and to prepare his mind for events, which appeared to me probable, and which have in due course of time taken place. This is what I conceived to be one of the most important duties of my station; and if I have not been more full and particular, it is because the names of those, who, in their turn, were to rule and to perish, seemed to me of secondary moment; and because, judging, in my lamentable dearth of intelligence, from such feeble lights as I could collect in scattered rays from different quarters, it seemed to me that my letters would have been more acceptable, had I been deceived as to facts and probabilities, or capable of communicating sentiments and opinions I did not entertain.

It has appeared to me, that Paris decides for the whole of France, and that the *Sans Culottes* (alias populace) decide for Paris; that, of course, factions would continually arise, waging inexplicable war with each other, and that the momentary influence of each, being founded on fear only, could not take on any stable form, or possess any durable existence: that each new stroke of the guillotine would weaken the force of liberal sentiment, and, consequently, diminish the chances of a free system.

I must repeat here, that plots and conspiracies are not to be attributed to the genius and temper of those who plot and conspire, but to the state of society; for it would be, I think, inconsequent, to imagine that in a given number of individuals, born in different countries or places, there should be a very great disproportion of talents and qualities. It seems more regular to believe, that in a virtuous and just society, the good qualities which exist are drawn into action, and the bad repressed by despair of success; while, on the contrary, in a depraved and vicious society, the good must remain inactive for the want of confidence and support, while the bad, released from the fear of shame, and prompted by cupidity or

ambition, count on the submission of the society, if they acquire the means of inspiring fear into the great mass, of which each individual pursues his personal interest unrestrained by moral principle.

After this preface, which might better, perhaps, have been spared, I proceed to mention, that many different schemes were, I think, carrying on to destroy the existent government. As to the idea that foreign powers excited the parties, I am not disposed either to adopt or reject it. I do not consider it as being at all necessary to the formation of a conspiracy, although very necessary to the destruction of those engaged in it. I explain; the pride of the nation will at any time rouse them from the perfect insensibility with which they would behold the Convention, and all its Committees, thrown into the river; and therefore it is useful to rouse that pride, by stating every attempt to overturn the government as originating with the foreign foe. And I remark here, that in the different reports made respecting these conspiracies, and the accusations against those engaged in them, it is as it were taken for granted, that the people would quietly submit to those, who by a *coup de main* should put themselves in possession of self created power.

I do not say that this is true, but I have no doubt that a certain duration of general terror, as the basis of a system of government, must inevitably produce that effect. The period of duration, required for any particular nation, will depend somewhat on the national character, but more on the morality of the people. To reason therefore *a priori* on the subject, our ideas must take on as much of an algebraic as logical form.

In examining historical facts, on the contrary, we are too apt, I think, to ascribe to individuals the events which are produced by general causes. The two factions lately crushed may be called the Dantonist and Hebertist. I should more readily attribute to the latter, than to the former, a connexion with foreign powers. I have strong reasons to believe that Danton

feared from them, and hoped from those who destroyed him. The Hebertists, however, may be considered, I think, as the Anti-Conventional, and the Dantonists as the Royal, faction. I except always the Aristocrats, who are in fact *null*, and who in the various changes which impend will, I am persuaded, have very little, if any, share. The more ardent spirits among them flew off long ago, either into foreign countries or the Vendée. I speak in generals, not universals. Those who remain are of that waxen substance called the men of property, who in foreign wars count so much, and civil wars so little.

Danton always believed, and, what is worse as to himself at least, always maintained, that a popular system of government for this country was absurd; that the people were too ignorant, too inconstant, and too corrupt to support a legal administration; that, habituated to obey, they required a master; and that, even had they been educated in the principles of freedom, and joined to the energy of sentiment the force of habit, yet like ancient Rome they had reached the period in which Cato was a madman, and Cæsar a necessary evil. His conduct was in perfect unison with those principles when he acted; but he was too voluptuous for his ambition, too indolent to acquire supreme power. Moreover, his object seems rather to have been great wealth, than great fame. He has fallen at the feet of Robespierre.

As to the Hebertists, whatever may have been the ultimate view of some, I presume that the greater number had nothing more in view, than a second edition of the 31st of last May. The destruction of all these Chiefs has given great power to the *Comité de Salut Public*, whose monthly renewal is so much a thing of course, that they may be considered as a permanent body. Hence it follows, that the next considerable party ought to arise there. The Hebertists believed the Convention to be so low in public opinion, that they could overturn it without the aid of its own members. They were deceived, or at least they were anticipated. The Dantonists supposed, that in the want of respect for their rulers, the people would readily turn on the little prisoner in the temple, that enthusias-

tic sentiment so congenial to the heart of man, so essential to that which beats in a French bosom. They also were anticipated; but if they judged rightly, they have unveiled a dreadful mystery.

Some one observed the other day, in conversation, that all the men of the tenth of August have passed away already, and those also of the second of September. It is certain that the tenth of August is chiefly to be attributed to Westermann, one of those lately guillotined, and that Danton was among the prime movers of the scenes of September. The reason for that massacre will be found, perhaps, in the old adage, *dead men tell no tales*. Oliver Cromwell understood well the value of mob sentiment, when he replied to his chaplain, vain of the applauding crowd which thronged round his master's coach, 'there would be as many, and as glad, to attend me at the gallows.' I do not believe that a good man in America can feel all the force of that expression; and, therefore, I believe it is very difficult to form on certain subjects a just opinion.

You will ask, perhaps, whether these factions are totally crushed, and whether, if so, similar factions are likely to arise. I think I have anticipated that question; and the general reflections, which, perhaps, have already fatigued you, contained the anticipated reply. I will not, therefore, repeat; and, besides, in the vast field of conjecture, each man is free to take the path which his judgment may direct, or inclination choose.

I have repeatedly mentioned the embargo at Bordeaux. Mr Fenwick, our Consul, came on lately to solicit redress on behalf of all the neutrals concerned, being furnished with the special powers of the other Consuls. Previous to his arrival, I had written to the Minister a letter of the eighth of last month, of which I enclose a copy. Mr Fenwick, after a sedulous attendance on the *Comité de Salut Public*, was so happy as to obtain a decision. By the bye, the Chargé d'Affaires of Denmark told me last December, that he was *confidentially* informed, that the embargo would not be taken off till the month of April.

In the course of the investigations, which lately took place respecting plots and conspiracies, some of the Ministers were arrested, and among them the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The system also is changed, as you will see by the gazettes, so that in future these agents are to be in name what they were before in fact. The *Chargé Provisoire* of the department of Foreign Affairs has sent me a copy of the *arrêté* of the *Comité de Salut Public*, of which, as well as of his note and my reply, you will find copies enclosed. I also enclose a short correspondence with the *Chargé d'Affaires* of Malta. I have, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.

Sainport, April 18th, 1794.

Dear Sir,

My last was of the fifteenth. This is written merely to cover copies of mine to the Minister of the eleventh of March, twelfth and twenty-second of March, of his answer of the sixth Germinal, mine of the second of April, and the answer to it of the twenty-third Germinal, written by Buchot, a second *Chargé Provisoire* of the department of Foreign Affairs.

You will, perhaps, ask why my letters to the Minister are in French, rather than in my own language. It is not to save time or trouble to myself, as you will easily suppose, but there are two strong reasons for it. First, it cuts off one source of delay which, in the tediousness of transacting business at present, is important, and the more so, as the objects once thrown off the Minister's table upon a translator's desk, might run the risk of not being taken up again. Another reason, of a different complexion, is, to avoid misinterpretation and mistake. A slight change of idea in changing the phrases might have unpleasant consequences, for men are very ticklish in such revolutions as the present; and, therefore, it becomes me to be cautious, so as not to say either too much or too little;

and, moreover, to use an Eastern phrase, not to put my tongue in the mouth of another.

In reading over the letters, of which copies are enclosed, I am reminded of what I wrote very long ago respecting Mr Coffyn, the agent at Dunkirk, who has expressed a wish to be appointed Vice Consul at that place, having heretofore acted in that capacity under the auspices of our Consul General, and of Dr Franklin. If I did not impose upon myself the obligation never to recommend to appointments, which I have no right to interfere in, the conduct of that gentleman, and his general good character, would have drawn from me a recommendation. As it is, I do not yet know whether my letter was ever received.

In mine of the twenty-first of December, 1792, I mentioned the plan of Danton, adding that I believed that it had never been wholly abandoned. His late execution will show that faith to have been well founded. And I am now told that, when condemned to death, he declared that he was glad to be rid of a state of society so abominable. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

EDMUND RANDOLPH TO M. FOUCHET, MINISTER FROM FRANCE.

Philadelphia, April 21st, 1794.

Sir,

Immediately on the receipt of your letter of the 9th instant, respecting our Minister at Paris,* I communicated it to the President of the United States; and on the same day I had the honor of verbally informing you, that the President did not hesitate to do the reciprocal act, which was requested. From that moment to this, we have been anxiously seeking a successor, who may be as acceptable to the French Republic, as the successor of M. Genet is to our own. I beg you to accept

* Requesting his recall by the direction of the French government.

this measure, as a fresh proof of our sincere desire to maintain friendship with your nation ; and to assure you, at the same time, that as no delay occurred, after the communication, which you have made, so would similar applications have been complied with, on any occasion, and in relation to any person. I have the honor, Sir, to be, with perfect respect and esteem, your most obedient servant,

EDMUND RANDOLPH.

EDMUND RANDOLPH TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Philadelphia, April 29th, 1794.

Dear Sir,

From the moment of my coming into office, I have sought opportunities for France ; in order that I might communicate to you the events of our country. But no direct one having presented itself, until the other day, when some of M. Fauchet's squadron sailed ; and the stoppage of the vessel, said to have his despatches on board, having arrested a private letter, which I had written to you, you can have received only my public letter of the tenth of January last.

The severity practised upon us by Great Britain, in her instructions of the 8th of June and 6th of November, 1793, has caused various movements in Congress. Mr Madison's resolutions, of which I before informed you, were discussed with great vehemence ; but seem at length to be swallowed up in the contemplation of measures of more eclat. A proposition, dictated by the daily reports of capture and condemnation in the British West Indies, was made for sequestering British debts ; but it did not include those due from the United States in the shape of stock. Warm debates ensued ; when this motion gave way to a proposition from Mr Abraham Clark, of Jersey, to break up all intercourse with Great Britain, until we should obtain satisfaction for the wrongs, under which we have so long labored, in commercial and other points. You

will observe by a copy of the original resolution, of the amendment, and of the Bill, every form, which it assumed in its passage through the House of Representatives, and its final defeat in the Senate.

However, you will not conclude from this miscarriage, that it has been produced by any other cause, than the desire to try once more to preserve harmony by negotiation. It is now nearly a fortnight, since Mr Jay was nominated as Envoy Extraordinary to London. The Senate were occupied in this business for some days; objections of various kinds mingling to interrupt it, such as a supposed inutility of the mission, the sentiments of Mr Jay upon matters, with which he may be charged, and the constitutional incompatibility or expediency of the Chief Justice exercising diplomatic functions. He was confirmed, as the extract from Brown's paper states, and will take ship at New York in about a fortnight, or a few days more. The irritation, which appears in all classes of people, renders it probable that if he fails in his errand, the United States will risk all the consequences of strong measures. You will immediately ask, what provision has been made for revenue, and an army? To this I must postpone my answer, until Congress shall have prepared it. They have before them plans of many sorts; but I cannot foresee which will be adopted, or how efficacious any of them may be.

A letter, which I received from France some time ago, intimated that you wished to return home. But I paid no respect to it; as you had never expressed this sentiment in the most distant manner, as far as I could collect from your official correspondence, or the knowledge of your friends. But, reflecting on the thing as possible, I was happy to believe, that your separation from France would be no great object of solicitude with you. This tribute of my own sensations is due to you; because, from my acquaintance with your correspondence, I am free to declare, that they afford proofs of an enlightened and deserving Minister.

During the present session of the Senate, your letters were

called for by them. The President, after much deliberation, thought it right to forward such of them as related to information merely; and to withhold such others, and such parts of all of them, as might hazard your informant, divulge anything pending, or be reverberated on you to your disadvantage. The President, Colonel Hamilton, and myself, went over the letters, under the influence of these ideas; and, if we have committed to the eye of the Senate a syllable, which may not accord with your opinion, it has not been from the want of the best disposition towards you, and your character. But even what was sent to them, was announced to be in confidence. The result, I believe, was much to your reputation, in the opinion of the most dispassionate members; and I am very certain, that nothing has been moved since, with any hostile intention to you. Perhaps I should not go too far, if I supposed, that the disclosure of the bulk of your official agency has suppressed many little murmurs, which we were continually hearing, before the truth of your conduct was brought to light.

You have been assailed, however, from another quarter. Nothing has been ever said to any officer of our government by the Ministers of France, which required attention, until the ninth day of April last; when M. Fauchet communicated to me a part of his instructions, indirectly, but plainly, marking a wish for your recall. In a few days afterwards, a letter was received from the Executive Provisory Council, expressive of the same wish. M. Fauchet was answered by me, under the direction of the President, as I am sure your good sense will think inevitable, that what the act of reciprocity demanded, should be performed. I enclose a copy of my letter to him, that you may see the footing, upon which alone the President places this concession to their request. He means to pursue the same idea in the nomination of a successor. Perhaps before this letter is closed, I may be able to send you a copy of the nomination.

In the letter of form accompanying the gentleman, who will

replace you, it will be my study to manifest, that it is not from a dissatisfaction, which the President has conceived at your conduct, but from reasons of a different sort, irresistible in themselves, that the step is taken. And I am thus explicit in my own opinions, because I do not distrust, that in the inquiries, which you shall make on your return, you will find, that at least candor and honor have been observed towards you on my part. I have the honor, Sir, to be with true regard and respect, your most obedient servant,

EDMUND RANDOLPH.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.

Paris, May 6th, 1794.

Dear Sir,

This will accompany duplicates of my letters of the 15th and 18th of last month. The season continues fine and forward, with every appearance of an abundant crop; and, judging from the productions now at market, the harvest will precede the usual time near a month.

You will see in the gazettes the taking of Landrecy, and the foreign papers, particularly the English papers, will give you the details on that subject which we want. There has been much fighting in that quarter, and although, as is usual, the success may have been varied, it appears definitively to have rested with the Allies, seeing that they have not been forced to raise the siege, but have taken the town.

I am told that the Republic now feed ten hundred and thirty thousand infantry, and ninety-four thousand cavalry. This is an immense army even on paper, and although we may easily suppose that there is some little exaggeration in the numbers, that there are some abuses in the account, and that casualties diminish considerably those who are really on the rolls, still it will appear that the force is very great. The daily expense of the provision department is about a million of dollars.

I learn also, that the *Comité de Salut Public* have agreed to be unanimous, so that the minority always adhere to the majority. This Committee, and that of *Sûreté Générale* must, I think, be either melted into one, or else have a contest for superiority. At present, the efficient power of the State is lodged with those Committees, and the former begin to publish their decrees, which have the force of laws, modifying, adding to, and repealing those of the Convention. It seems to me that this Committee are not yet fully apprized of the extent of their own authority ; that is to say, of the wide and deep effect of the terror, which has been excited by such frequent and abundant executions as take place throughout France. I think they may do what they please, provided the revolutionary tribunals remain in their hands. We shall see what system is to follow therefrom.

I am told that Robespierre's wish is to retire to private life, so soon as the peace shall have established that form of government, which may be finally adopted here.

Enclosed you have the copy of a letter of the 22d of April, from Mr Anderson at Nantes, to me, and of my answer. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.

Sainport, May 31st, 1794

Dear Sir,

This will accompany a duplicate of my last, of the sixth instant, also copies of my letter of the tenth instant to the Commissioner of Foreign Relations, of his answer of the fourth Prairial, or twenty-third instant, and of my reply of the twenty-sixth. You will perceive that Mr Warden had been so imprudent as to lodge the despatches entrusted to his care with the Justice of Peace at Morlaix. This was done by the advice of John Diot, acting there as Consular Agent. Whether that advice is

to be attributed to ignorance or design, I know not; but it might easily have been foreseen, that the deposit would not be safe. I hope your despatches are in cypher, if they contain anything which is not of a very public nature.

The gazettes will communicate to you such intelligence as we have here, and you will obtain from other channels much fuller and earlier intelligence, as to what is called news, than any which I can give. Moreover, this letter may be long ere it reaches you, for I have not any present opportunity; and such is the state of things, that, unless letters be committed specially to the care of some trusty person, there is very little chance that they will ever reach you.

I have not received a line from you, nor from your predecessor, posterior to the despatches by Captain Culver, desiring M. Genet's recall.

We have had a sort of novel, or farce, lately, the subject of which was, that certain Commissioners had arrived from the United States at Brest. You will see in the gazettes what relates to them so far; and now I am told, that Mr Jefferson is one of them, that he has been in Paris, and is gone to Switzerland, where a Congress is to be held of the neutral powers. And, what is more extraordinary, this intelligence comes through a confidential channel, in general well informed. Now as I do not conceive it possible, that any commissioners from the United States should have passed through Paris without seeing me, I am at a loss to conjecture with whom the honor of the invention lies, and also what can have been the object. For as to foreign powers, they cannot be the dupes, and as to the people here, they think more of the guillotine than of anything else.

In my last I mentioned to you the omnipotence of the two Committees. Apparently this term is applicable only to that of *Salut Public*; but the inquisitorial powers lodged with the other (and by means of which, they can arrest whom they please) give them great weight in the general scales. It is, I presume, needless to repeat what is mentioned to me, that the Conven-

tion, as well as all those other authorities, who once could influence its deliberations, view with jealousy, but with apprehension and deep awe, these colossal pillars of the Republic, which they have raised, or permitted to be raised. This, as well as the ferment inherent in the nature of all such bodies, you will certainly perceive at the first glance, and your judgment will seize the remote consequences intuitively. On my part, therefore, it is more fitting to observe, that these consequences are more remote than might be supposed. A conviction of that instability which attends all fortuitous greatness, more especially such as is founded on fear, and the certainty of complete ruin, should they be overthrown, will long smother all minor discontents; moreover, the apprehension from the foreign enemy will, in my opinion, both promote their concord and support their power.

Should the convoy of provisions expected from America be intercepted by Lord Howe, it might cause a great commotion, because it would undoubtedly affect the subsistence of Paris, and no individual will take on himself any responsibility respecting that object. Hence might arise crimination and recrimination, of course discord and all its consequences. If no exterior causes should preserve union, a very little experience of human affairs would enable us to pronounce, that it could not long exist.

This leads me to say one word about the northern army, premising that all the other armies taken together are but trifling diversions. The late arrangement made by Mr Pitt with the King of Prussia, by concentrating the interest and objects of the two chief powers, Britain and Austria, gives much more consistence to the war on the part of the Allies. They seem also to have found out at last, what indeed the Convention has proclaimed a dozen times, that all the magic of the Revolution is contained in the single word, Paris. Now the high road to that city is from Flanders by Valenciennes, Landrecy, Cambrai, &c. If matters are to be decided in the plains of Picardy, numbers will, I think, avail but little against

a formidable cavalry. You will see that no quarter is to be given to the British and Hanoverian troops. The Austrians are, already, but little disposed to give quarter. The corps of emigrants and deserters will naturally sell their lives as dear as they can. This campaign, therefore, will be one of the bloodiest in the annals of history. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.

Sainport, May 31st, 1794.

Dear Sir,

I have already written to you a letter this day on the current affairs. This will be devoted to a different object. I have lately seen in a gazette your report on the inquiries received from the belligerent powers, and also some debates in our House of Representatives on a discrimination between those nations with whom we have a commercial treaty, and those with whom we have none. I observe that some frigates are to be built for the protection of our trade. These things have suggested, or rather recalled, ideas which I will venture to communicate at the risk of tiring your patience.

While I had the honor to sit in Congress during the war, it was my lot to oppose what then appeared to me a rage for treaties; and yet the respectability, which our cause was supposed to acquire by the acknowledgment of European Potentates, militated in favor of those, who wished to extend our diplomacy. At the peace, however, that ground of argument was removed. Moreover, we found ourselves in a situation unfavorable to the forming of treaties, because there was no constitutional authority to enforce the observance of them. Those powers, therefore, who might contract with us, were exposed not only to the common danger of a wilful violation on our part, but to that also of a general non-performance and of individual injury, without the permission, and beyond the control, of government. The obligations, therefore, not

being equal, it was not deemed prudent by some to enter into engagements with the United States; and thus we felt ourselves sinking beneath the level of national character.

Our new Constitution made ample provision on that subject; and, if I mistake not, a steady adherence to its principles will place us first in dignity, as in good faith, among political societies. Our treaties now form *the supreme law of the land*, and therefore our situation, in respect to foreign powers, is reversed; for they can violate their contracts with us, but we cannot violate our contracts with them; neither have we, perhaps, any constitutional means of annulling our obligations, when they shall have broken their engagements. I will not here inquire how far it would be proper to make a provision of that sort, as an amendment to the Constitution, nor whether it would not in effect destroy the clause, which has rendered treaties on our part inviolable; but I will venture to infer from this our relative position, that we should be cautious *what treaties we form, and with whom*. *What treaties*, because, if contingent engagements become onerous to us, we *must* comply with them; whereas, should they become onerous to those with whom we have contracted, they *may* release themselves. We should be cautious also with *whom* we treat, because in the contingency last stated, some nations *will* release themselves, and others will *not*. Now, in political as in natural bodies, decisions of the will depend, so far as good faith is concerned, on *moral character and constitution*.

We have at present to complain, that both Britain and France have violated their treaties with us. Yet I can by no means consider the cases equal; for as to Britain, the act proceeded from cool meditation of regular government; but in France, it is one among many bad effects of that extraordinary situation into which she is thrown. Without dwelling farther on this distinction, I shall endeavor to state those objections to the multiplication of treaties, which formerly swayed my opinion; and, first, it is no small one, that we

should be thereby drawn into the vortex of European politics, which we should, I think, avoid as much as possible. Not that we should be wholly unmindful of what passes in this hemisphere ; on the contrary, I am persuaded that we ought to be extremely watchful ; but I would draw a strong broad line between vigilance and activity.

Secondly, it has always appeared to me, that the less we are fettered by diplomatic engagements, the better shall we be able to preserve a firm and equal conduct in difficult cases. The law of nations may be likened to the common law, in that all cases heretofore doubtful have been settled by *able* judges ; whereas each treaty, like a new statute, gives rise to intricate questions, and the ultimate mode of determining them makes a good mind shudder.

Thirdly, it has also appeared to me, that in most controversies between European powers, we should preserve an exact neutrality. We may safely leave them to adjust their balance of power in their own way, because, if either of the scales should prove too heavy for us, the means of lightening it are at hand, and completely within our grasp. Now I am convinced that a neutrality may be most easily preserved, when no belligerent power can rightfully claim any privilege ; because, by conferring such privilege at our pleasure, we can sufficiently punish either of the parties for the injuries and indignities we may have cause to complain of.

Lastly, I cannot but think that our present, compared with our future situation, is such that in treating now, we must make bad bargains, even were there any tribunal to enforce the performance in a peaceable way. The paucity of our numbers, the apparent feebleness of our pecuniary resources, the want of naval and military force, even the extent of our dominion, which is, from that circumstance, of difficult defence and easy invasion, will prevent others from granting, will even prevent us from asking, what we ought to have, in order that a treaty made now should be reasonable in ten years, or tolerable in twenty. Whatever may be the intrinsic worth of these reasons,

certainly they derive weight from that morality of our national constitution, which has been already noticed.

This constitution was made subsequent to our existent treaties, and even after the violation by Great Britain of that which concluded the war. Happily she has hitherto eluded a compliance, and thereby prevented the forming of a commercial treaty. I say happily, because I am persuaded that in a few years we shall have occasion to rejoice, and the British to regret, that perversity of counsels, which prevented their Ministers from meeting our advances.

We complain justly also, that France has broken her treaty with us, more especially to confiscate goods of her enemies on board our ships. This decree is evidently against her own interest; but, in my opinion, the clause in our treaty, thereby annulled, was injurious to *our* interest. As to the maxim, that free ships make free goods, the arguments pro and con are familiar to us, and, therefore, I shall not enter into them. But the fair conclusion of those in favor of it goes to a protection of all commercial property on the ocean. Therefore, the maxim, even were it just, would not be generally admitted until the practice of making prizes were wholly abandoned. Then all such clauses in a treaty would be superfluous, and until then, unless enforced by a strong marine, they will be nugatory.

But it seems to me, from the view which I am enabled to take of our commerce, that however the transportation, in our ships, of goods belonging to subjects of a belligerent power, might prove a momentary advantage to our merchants, it must be injurious to our general interests. I take it for granted, that our shipping is not sufficient to pursue the fisheries and to carry our own produce to market. But if it were, I should consider those as the proper employments, and I should reason thus. By putting half of the navigation employed in transporting our own productions into this neutral carrying trade, half of those productions must remain on hand, or be transported by the belligerent powers, and in either case our agricultural

interests must suffer ; for, as to other neutrals, their shipping will be employed in the same neutral carrying trade. Now if this reasoning be just, on the ground that we had a sufficiency of shipping, how much more forcible is it in the fact of an insufficiency. But it may be said, that the neutral carrying trade, by giving encouragement to our shipping, would greatly increase the amount. I answer, of our fictitious shipping, *yes* ; of our real shipping, *no* ; and merchants will understand me.

Moreover, I state hypothetically, either we have the tonnage needful for our commerce, or we have not. If we have not, the increased freight of our own commodities will, in time of war, be a sufficient encouragement, and draw into that channel as much of the national strength and wealth as is consistent with the general welfare, and more perhaps, if we extend our views to all the moral effects of commerce, especially when it engages a disproportionate part of the society. If our navigation be equal to the employment our commerce can give it, any increase would be doubly pernicious. First, because throwing the surplus out of employ would occasion loss to owners in general, since they would be forced to underwork each other, till, by the ruin of some, things would return to their natural level. And secondly, because, whatever difference there may be in opinions, as to the propriety of taking men from the plough, in a thinly peopled country, to ply the loom or bend the sail, while manufactures and navigation are unequal to the demand, no man of sound mind will contend, that we should leave our fields untilled to rival populous countries in the carrying trade. In our vast territory, a fertile soil and excellent clime invite to rural and domestic bliss, the source of a vigorous and virtuous population. Why then should we imitate those who, by the severity of nature, are driven to seek on the ocean a subsistence, which the land denies, and who find, in the casualties of that dangerous element, a resource against excessive numbers ?

Having said thus much on treaties, I come now to their

sanction, *an American marine*. Whatever apprehensions may be entertained from a standing army, nothing is to be feared from a standing navy; wherefore, I think we should not follow the European example of building ships to lie idle, until a war calls them into action, at a great increase of expense, and by great injury to commerce. This may suit the ambitious, who wish to extend their possessions; but a peaceable nation, placed as we are, should, I think, make perpetual provision for every ship that is built, and her fleet should be annually manned, victualed, and equipped, and should cruise during the fine season. I believe that we could now maintain twelve ships of the line, perhaps twenty, with a due proportion of frigates and smaller vessels. And I am tolerably certain, that while the United States of America pursue a just and liberal conduct, *with twenty sail of the line at sea*, no nation on earth will dare to insult them. I believe also that, not to mention individual losses, five years of war would involve more national expense, than the support of a navy for twenty years. One thing I am thoroughly convinced of, that, if we do not render ourselves respectable, we shall continue to be insulted. And let it not be supposed, that a remedy for our weakness can be found in Conventions with other powers *for preserving neutrality*. In such Conventions there are often dupes, and it is the weaker who go to the wall.

During the last war, no sooner had the Dutch acceded to the armed neutrality, than Great Britain fell upon them, and those who set the plan agoing looked on with all imaginable composure. In the late treaty between Denmark and Sweden, you will observe that time is given to the belligerent powers for repentance and amendment, before any hostile act of resentment by the contracting parties. You will observe, also, that the period specified is sufficient to permit the arrestation of all supplies shipped for this country, during the present season. Thus the next autumn and winter are left clear for negotiation, *should the Allies be unsuccessful in this campaign*. That treaty, therefore, may be considered as a demonstration

of a force and temper, which do not exist ; and no one in this quarter is the dupe of such appearances.

But what can be done by the weak, to preserve their little air of dignity ? They do not wish to join the coalition, and they dare not connect their fortunes with the French Republic, lest in a sudden change of government she should join those now acting against her. All that is left, therefore, is to temporize with the best grace they can.

It is time to conclude this too long letter. Believe, I pray you, in the sincerity of that esteem and respect, with which I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

EDMUND RANDOLPH TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Philadelphia, June 10th, 1794.

Dear Sir,

The letter, of which I had the honor of enclosing a copy to you in mine of the twenty-eighth of April last, was written as soon as the application came from the French Minister here. The embargo, which continued from the twenty-fifth of March to the twenty-fifth of May, has rendered it very uncertain, how much sooner than this you will receive the original of that. Colonel Monroe, your successor, will show to you a copy of my answer to M. Fauchet's demand, and the President's nomination of him. From all which you will collect, that the moving cause has been the irresistible call for an act of reciprocity. Under this impression, and with the knowledge of the sentiments of the President, I have not thought it necessary to prepare formal letters of recall, begging you to consider this, as the most respectful mode, which I can devise, of communicating to you the new arrangement.

The letter, now enclosed for taking leave, is sent solely for the sake of form and your own accommodation ; and it may be delivered or not, as you think proper. I have the honor

to be, with great respect and esteem, dear Sir, your most obedient servant,

EDMUND RANDOLPH.

GEORGE WASHINGTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Baltimore, June 19th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

The difficulty, under existing circumstances, of knowing what to write to you, had determined me to write nothing, but to let the matter rest altogether upon the public communications from the Secretary of State.

Coming to this place, however, on a flying visit to Mount Vernon, and finding the vessel, of which Mr Monroe is on board, had not left the river, I have so far departed from my determination, as to be seated in order to assure you that my confidence in, and friendship and regard for you, remain undiminished.

To time, and your own observations, if you should return immediately to this country, I commit the rest; and it will be nothing new to assure you, that I am always and very sincerely yours, affectionately,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

TO M. BUCHOT, COMMISSIONER OF EXTERIOR RELATIONS.

Translation.

Sainport, June 21st, 1794.

Sir,

During the last war, France furnished several sums of money to the United States of America, both under the head of loans and that of gratuities. The first of these advances was a million of livres, and it appears to have been made on the tenth of

June, 1776. It is entered among the gratuities, but it is not known to whom it was paid, nor how it was appropriated. Doctor Franklin, in settling the accounts of the United States with the French Ministry, neglected to ask for the papers, which relate to this subject; and afterwards, when the banker of the United States applied, (in the months of August and September, 1786,) to M. Durival, in order to obtain them, he assured him that he had communicated the request to the Count de Vergennes, who said that the receipt in question could be of no use to the banker, since he was not entrusted with the pecuniary affairs of the United States till January, 1777, and that this payment was made on the tenth of June, 1776.

Our Ministers were also given to understand, that it was useless to urge the demand for a paper in proof of a payment, which would be of no account in the reimbursements to be made by the United States. Dr Franklin concluded from this, that the advance had been lodged in the hands of M. Beaumarchais, and that it was a cabinet mystery, whose eclaireissement ought to be a matter of indifference to us, at least till it became necessary to set this sum against the demands of Beaumarchais, for the supplies which he had furnished to the United States.*

This occasion has now arrived, but without this you will perceive, at the first glance, that the payment having been acknowledged by the United States, the receiver, whoever he may be, ought to give them an account of the manner in which he employed it. Besides, mysteries serve too often only to cover wasteful expenditures, of which the people are the victims. It is therefore given me in charge to solicit the papers, acknowledges the payment of a million of livres, as a gratuity made by France to the United States of America on the tenth of June, 1776. I think they will be found among the accounts of M.

* See all the letters on this subject in the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution*, Vol. iv. pp. 222—228.

Durival, then head of the Treasury department for Foreign Affairs ; and I apply to you, in these circumstances, with the more confidence, as I am fully convinced of the good will of the French government towards the United States. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

GEORGE WASHINGTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Mount Vernon, June 25th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

The sole object of the enclosed letter was to evince to you, that, notwithstanding your recall, you held the same place in my estimation that you did before it happened. I expected to have got the letter into Colonel Monroe's hands, before the vessel in which he sailed, had left Patapsco river ; but a fresh fair wind coming up, prevented its reaching him.

Since my arrival at this place, I have been favored with your private letter of the 12th of March, enclosing the duplicate of the 5th of February. For both I thank you. To common accidents, or to the interception of letters for purposes that may be guessed, are to be ascribed those disappointments of which you complain ; for I am almost certain, that information of what was going forward in this country was regularly transmitted to you ; possibly, and probably, not by duplicates, which ought to have been the case, for the greater certainty of getting it to you.

The uncertainty, when letters are not entrusted to confidential persons, or sent by special messengers, of their coming to hand, will restrain me from going into detail at this time. I shall only add, therefore, to the acknowledgment of the receipt of the above letters, that I am entirely ignorant of the source from whence, or the foundation on which, Major Jackson has erected the fabrics of your recall, and of your successor. Neither directly nor indirectly could he have derived them

from me, for the best of all reasons, viz. that not until some considerable time after M. Fauchet had arrived in this country, did I entertain an idea of the former, or contemplate the latter; for until then, I had supposed you stood well with the persons in power. Sure I am, nothing short of evidence to the contrary, with the request that accompanied it, would have induced the measure. To Major Jackson I have never written a line since he left this country, nor received one from him.

The prospective you have drawn is not very pleasing; but it serves to make one more anxious for a nearer view.

The affairs of this country *cannot go amiss*. There are *so many watchful guardians of them*, and such *infallible guides*, that one is at no loss for a director at every turn. But of these matters I shall say little; if you are disposed to return to it, I will leave you to judge of them from your own observation. My primary objects, and to which I have steadily adhered, have been to preserve the country in peace if I can, and to be prepared for war if I cannot; to effect the first, upon terms consistent with the respect which is due to ourselves, and with honor, justice, and good faith to all the world.

Mr Jay, and not Mr Jefferson, as has been suggested to you, embarked as Envoy Extraordinary for England, about the middle of May. If he succeeds, well; if he does not, why, knowing the worst, we must take measures accordingly. I am yours, affectionately,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

M. BUCHOT TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

Translation.

Paris, July 7th, 1794.

Sir,

In your letter of the twenty-first ultimo, you request of me the communication of the papers, which explain in what man-

ner the million advanced to the United States, on the tenth of June, 1776, was paid.

I sent your request to the *Comité de Salut Public*, to whom it appeared just, in this respect, to render to the United States the satisfaction, which was denied to them by the ministers of the ancient *régime*. In consequence, I caused the necessary researches to be made, and I here subjoin a copy of a receipt, dated June tenth, 1776, which appears to be the one desired by the United States to regulate their accounts.*

As you have well observed, there is no occasion for mystery between two nations united by all the ties of friendship, and of a common interest. I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO M. BUCHOT.

Translation.

Sainport, July 11th, 1794.

Sir,

I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 7th instant, and pray you to accept and present to the *Comité de Salut Public* my thanks, for the communication of the receipt of Caron de Beaumarchais.

I think it my duty to observe to you, with regard to this

* The following is an exact copy of the original receipt, as transmitted by M. Buchot to Mr Morris.

‘J’ai reçu de Monsieur du Vergier, conformément aux ordres de Monsieur le Comte de Vergennes, en date du 5. courant, que je lui ai remis, la somme d’un million, dont je rendrai compte à le dit Sieur Comte de Vergennes. A Paris, ce 10. Juin, 1776.

‘Signé,

CARON DE BEAUMARCHAIS.

‘Bon pour un million de livres Tournois.’

Hence it appears, that the money was paid to M. Beaumarchais, as Dr Franklin had conjectured.

subject, that considerable sums have already been paid to him by the United States for various objects, arms, ammunition, and habiliments, which he sent to America during the last war. Now there is reason to believe, that a part of these supplies were taken from the public magazines of France, and in this case it seems right, that he should be accountable for them to the French Republic.* I have the honor to be, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.

Sainport, July 22d, 1794.

Dear Sir,

This letter will cover the state of my account with the United States, made up, on the first instant, agreeably to the instructions given by Mr Jefferson on that subject. No opportunity has since presented for the transmission.

The bankers of the United States in Amsterdam wrote to me on the twentieth of June, that they have reason to apprehend, that it will be extremely difficult for them to supply me in future for the amount of my salary and expenses attending my mission. This arises from a law they have passed in Holland similar to the British statute, which prohibits the payment of funds belonging to those, who were in this country during a certain time. This same statute has, I understand, locked up my money in England; but I have written on that subject to Mr Pinckney. I expect also that the Dutch administration will except my drafts from their general system.

* In replying to this letter, M. Buchot observes;—‘I have made use of the suggestion, which you gave me respecting the supplies rendered by M. Beaumarchais to the United States during the last war, and I have communicated it to a suitable person to search for such proofs as may exist, as to the part of these supplies, which may have been taken from the magazines of France, and for which in such case this citizen is indebted to the Republic.’

If they do not, I must employ other resources. In this country, as you will have seen by my former letters, exchange is fixed at par. I have, however, in my account charged the value of sums paid at the time of payment, or rather carried to the credit of the United States the difference, as you will perceive.

It is difficult, at present, to determine the value of Assignats compared with bullion. The sale of coin is prohibited on pain of death, so that no fixed course obtains. To judge by the prices of goods and provisions, bread excepted, the paper money is not worth above half its nominal amount, but the same articles are not to be obtained cheaper for hard money, and silver in bullion is by no means at double the former price. It has risen during the last spring from par to about a third advance, and is now perhaps something higher.

I pray you will pay to Monsieur Nagot, the superior of the Catholic Seminary at Baltimore, or to Messieurs Chicoisneau, Tessier and Garnier, the directors thereof, the sum of two thousand four hundred and thirty dollars, and fifty-five cents, for which I have received the value here, and shall give credit therefor in my next account. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.

Sainport, July 23d, 1794.

Dear Sir,

This will accompany a duplicate of mine dated the thirty-first of May. For the reasons mentioned in the beginning of that letter, I have not since written to you as I could have wished; but in the interim I have received yours of the tenth of January, covering one of the third from your predecessor. Having already expressed my congratulations on your appointment, I shall not here repeat, but only confirm, what I then wrote respecting it. But I will mention my perfect sat-

isfaction in perusing Mr Jefferson's statement of our dispute with Great Britain, which is, in my opinion, a masterly performance. I hope his abilities will not be lost to the public.

At the same time, however, and with the same sincerity, I declare my belief, that the United States will gain by the change made in your department. Without balancing different qualities and qualifications, a difficult and unpleasant task, it is sufficient that we may now hope for a union of counsel and action among the different members of the Executive; a thing which appears to me essential, and the want of which, or at least the idea that it was wanting, has, I know, been injurious.

If my several letters have reached you, they will have communicated from time to time the best view which I could form of parties, temper, and opinions here. All these, however, are from the nature of things changeable, and it is only upon the final organization of a permanent government, and view of the territory over which it is to extend, that we can decide as to the prevailing interests and the system, which may thence originate. In all events, it appears probable that a friendly intercourse between the United States and the French nation will be mutually useful and desirable. Circumstances yet unborn may tend to relax or to strengthen our connexion. As they arise, and as they promise to arise, I shall study to communicate them.

In mine of the thirty-first of May, I sent a copy of what I wrote on the nineteenth of that month to the Minister of Exterior Relations. I now transmit the copy of his answer of the tenth Prairial, or twenty-ninth of May, and eighteenth Prairial, or sixth of June, with my reply of the tenth of that month. Mr Warder came on hither the fourth of the present month, and has since pursued his route by the way of Switzerland; but I have as yet heard nothing farther of the despatches he was charged with, although frequent inquiries have been made. I trust that they were not important, and

am the less solicitous about them, as Mr Jay has doubtless taken over duplicates of everything essential.

The gazettes will communicate, ere this reaches you, the great success of the French arms. As far as can be judged here, the King of Prussia has, according to custom, played a double part, and his troops, instead of joining those of the other Allies in Flanders, have remained where they were, while the French armies filed off to the left, and broke with irresistible impetuosity into the Low Countries. These being quite open belong always to the party superior in the field. As yet, this Republic seems disposed rather to lay them under contribution, than to hold the possession; but, if Valenciennes should submit, a different determination might take place. However, the sieges needful to secure them as far as the Rhine would consume more time than remains in this campaign; for besides Luxemburg, Maestricht, and the citadel of Antwerp, which are on central situations, the whole frontier of Juliers, Guelderland, Clèves, Dutch Brabant, and Dutch Flanders, are stuck full of fortified towns.

The success of the French arms will have secured that of Mr Jay's mission, whose object I learn from common report. The *justice* of the British Cabinet (whose sincerity the President is well acquainted with,) will, I am persuaded, submit to the forcible arguments, which Mr Jay is directed to use; for the nation is not now in a temper to indulge Mr Pitt and Mr Simcoe in their projects. If I am rightly informed, there is an end to the coalition. Each party will retire as well as he can, and Britain will cover herself behind her wooden walls. In the case of a maritime struggle, they will not find the enmity of America to be a very pleasant thing. Of course, you will have abundant professions of good will, brotherly affection, &c. &c., and I believe they will now make *sacrifices* to keep us quiet, much more so to gain our assistance. But I will dwell no longer on this chapter, postponing all farther remarks, till the government of this country shall have adopted a plan for her *ci-devant* colonies.

As to the interior affairs of France, one prominent and pleasant feature is an early and most abundant harvest. This is now gathering, and what is singular is the ripeness of wheat, barley, and oats at the same moment. In a few days, the whole crop will be secured, and they will begin to eat of it; for there remains scarcely anything of last year's produce; so that if the present had not been fit for use till towards the end of the next month, as is usually the case, God knows what would have become of us all. The abundance of the present year extends to every object, forage, pulse, roots, and other vegetables, as well as grain. The vineyards also promise more liquor than there are vessels to put it in. I conclude that we shall find little vent for our productions here, excepting our salted provisions, which must be in great demand. Moreover, I incline to the opinion that our vessels will not meet henceforward with the same vexations, which have been hitherto experienced, so that exportations of salted fish and flesh, may, I think, be safely encouraged for this country. To these may be added pot and pearl ashes, some flax seed and rice, also fish oil; and, in payment, our merchants will receive wines and brandies.

There is at present a considerable ferment of parties, whose object, on the one hand, is to overturn, and, on the other, to preserve the colossal power of the two great Committees. Sooner or later that ferment must lead to an explosion, and the apprehension from the foreign enemy being greatly lessened, men turn more easily to the consideration of their domestic system. By a late decree, the Committee of *Salut Public* has secured to itself the promotion of one third to all places in the army, which gives them a stronger hold of that unwieldy instrument. Sooner or later, it must, unless dissolved, escape from the grasp of a multitudinous body. Such is the law of nature; but that catastrophe is yet at a distance, and depends, I think, on the continuance of the war. Probably before it happens, the Committee will no longer exist in its present form; for the mass of power there collected will, in

the natural order of things, either excite so much envy as to dissolve the Committee, or, forcing them in self defence to increase it by severe and frequent exercise, so as to destroy all opposition, will generate in its bosom the causes of change. These are evils resulting from that state of violence in which society now exists, because in such state nothing can obtain a firm foundation; and how long this may continue, God only knows. Hitherto power and property are at war, and the latter is a daily victim; whereas it is their union, which can alone establish permanent systems of government.

Mr Jefferson's letter of the thirteenth of June, 1793, reached me above a year after its date. Immediately on receipt of it, I wrote to the Commissioner of Exterior Relations the letter dated the twenty-first of June, of which I enclose a copy, as also a copy of his answer of the nineteenth Messidor, or seventh instant, from which you will learn, that the million of livres, hitherto unaccounted for, was received by M. de Beaumarchais, and, of course, ought, in a *new statement of his accounts*, to be carried to his debit at the date. The operation will then, in all probability, be such as to eat up the balance reported to be due to him. I hope this information may reach you in season. It would have been transmitted long ago, if, by good fortune, a copy of that letter of the thirteenth of June, 1793, had been sent by Captain Culver.

I trouble you, Sir, with copies of my letters of the twenty-third and twenty-ninth of last month to the Commissioner of Exterior Relations, his of the sixteenth Messidor, or fourth of July, and of one just received from him of the thirtieth Messidor, or eighteenth of July, from which it would seem, that my numerous complaints are at length to be attended to. I am inclined to think that this will happen, and I am persuaded that in proportion as our administration is firm and united, it will be powerful at home and respected abroad. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

P. S. In making up my letter it occurs to me, that I had taken no notice of the strange complaints made against me by

M. Genet, in his letter of the eighteenth of last September to the Secretary of State. I do not think it worth while to enter into the investigation of them; and the more so, as the falsity of some, and the folly of others, are evident from facts in possession of your office, and from the style and nature of the complaints themselves. But, while on this subject, it may not be amiss to mention, that, during the last winter in conversation with the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, (who, I am pretty sure, had instructed M. Fauchet to apply for my removal,) I told him that if this government wished for any person in my place, the best way would be to tell me so, and I would apply for my own recall. He answered by assurances of esteem, &c. &c.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

Paris, August 14th, 1794.

My Dear Friend,

I am preparing for my departure; but as yet can take no step, because there is a kind of interregnum in the government, and Mr Monroe is not yet received; at which he grows somewhat impatient. The intelligence you give me respecting myself is particularly pleasing. I desired much to be recalled, but I would not ask it, because I conceived my honor concerned in seeing the thing out. My only remaining wish is, that the measure may be as useful to the United States as it is pleasing to me. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.

Paris, August 18th, 1794.

Dear Sir,

This will accompany a duplicate of what I had the honor to write on the twenty-third of last month. Since which, viz. on the sixth instant, I received yours of the tenth of June;

that of the twenty-ninth of April has not arrived. If I could have permitted myself to have formed a personal wish, it would have been precisely what has happened. To be recalled on the application of the Committee of *Salut Public*, and to preserve, at the same time, the confidence of government, is getting out of a wretched position on better terms than I ever hoped for. Accept, therefore, my thanks, my sincere and hearty thanks, and present them, I pray you, to the President. My only remaining wish respecting this affair is, that my successor may fully succeed, and realize the expectations of the United States, or even surpass them.

It is, I think, proper to correct two things in my last now enclosed. First, as to the dissolution of the alliance against France. I incline to think, at present, that it will take on a new form, instead of being dissolved. Secondly, as to the harvest. It is less abundant than was supposed. I will not say anything, just now, respecting Robespierre, &c. &c. If my return to America should be delayed, I will inform you pretty fully of the state of things by the first safe opportunity. Accept, in the mean time, the assurances of that esteem and respect, with which I am, my dear Sir, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.

Paris, August 31st, 1794.

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 19th of April has at length reached me. It came through the hands of the *Comité de Salut Public*, and was, of course, read by them, which is well. I thank you for the information which it contains respecting public affairs; and it affords me much pleasure to reflect, that my successor will probably receive from you similar communications, which will be highly useful. I have in former letters said so much on that subject, that I will add nothing here.

The history you give of my recall is perfectly satisfactory, so far as I am personally concerned. I have never doubted an instant, that I should be treated with candor and honor, and I have even the confidence, that I shall always be blest with the friendship of those honest men, who administer the government of the United States.

I have said above, so far as I am personally concerned. It may be necessary to explain myself, and I cannot do it better, than by making a kind of testamentary request on behalf of my successor, should any of the factions or parties, which may prevail in this country, solicit his recall, supposing always that his conduct be proper in regard to the United States ;—I ask then for him, under that restriction, the confidence and protection of the American government, to the end that it may be known and felt here. I hope a thorough conviction may be made to exist, that he is unmovable. I put out of question an extravagant conduct like that of M. Genet, for I am sure that he will not sin on that side of the line, and I hope will not err on the other. Whenever a stable government shall be established in France, it will be certainly right to have here a man agreeable to that government, ; and I think a coincidence of mutual interests will render the place of such a man easy and pleasant. Until that period, pardon me, my dear Sir, for saying, that I think a firm and decisive tone and conduct will best preserve the peace, as well as the dignity, of our country. Switzerland will not be insulted, and yet there is no extended waste of waters to separate her from France.

I will not communicate my sentiments of public affairs, because I cherish the hope of doing it in person, and have written this letter to provide against the untoward events to which maritime affairs are subjected. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.

Paris, September 18th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

I shall write but a few lines by this conveyance. The resources of this country will hold out till the end of April next, but then things will appear in a situation truly deplorable. Orders are given to push into Spain with all the force which can be collected. The object is to obtain a separate peace. Attempts will be made also to obtain peace with Savoy and Italy. These failing, to supply the south with food is impossible. Spain offered peace some time ago, but met with a contemptuous refusal. As yet the enemy seem to be unacquainted with the true state of things. I am, &c.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Hamburg, December 30th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

At this late hour, and from this remote corner, I am to acknowledge your favors of the 19th and 25th of June. I did not reply from Paris, because I wished for a safe conveyance; and although none offers itself at present, yet I will write what occurs for communication, and take a future chance for transmission.

The assurances of friendly esteem, which your letters convey, are very pleasing; but, indeed, I never doubted of the sentiments you express, and even go so far as to flatter myself, that the measure in question was not agreeable to you. It was highly so to me, and although I am persuaded that you will believe me, on my word, I will nevertheless assign some reasons why a change of situation was desirable.

And first, you will see from what is publicly known respecting those, who administered the French despotism, how pain-

ful it must have been to represent our virtuous Republic to such persons. I had stayed, at some risk, after the 10th of August, because I thought the interests of America required it, and I did not ask my recall at a subsequent period, because it would not have been honorable to abandon a post which, if no longer unsafe, was at least very unpleasant. I felt that I was useless, and indeed that nobody could be useful, until some permanent system should be established. I saw misery and affliction every day, and all around me, without power to mitigate, or means to relieve ; and I felt myself degraded by the communications I was forced into with the worst of mankind, in order to obtain redress for the injuries sustained by my fellow citizens.

During that state of things, I was grossly insulted by the arrest of a lady in my house, by order of the Committee of General Safety. I could not resent this, as I ought to have done, by quitting the country, because a great number of our citizens were then detained in France, with much of their property, and I knew the violence which those who administered the government were capable of. Moreover, I saw with regret, that the temper of America was not such as her best citizens could have wished ; and the conduct of Britain, rendered a temporizing conduct with France indispensable. My representations obtained a half apology and promise of satisfaction, but occasioned the order to solicit my recall ; of which I was apprised within four and twenty hours after it was given, and might easily have shown whence it originated ; but, to tell you the truth, I was inclined to wish that I might be removed *on their application*. I really believe it was necessary to my reputation. So long as they believed in the success of their demand, they treated my representations with indifference and contempt ; but at last, hearing nothing from their Minister on that subject, or indeed on any other, they took it into their heads that I was immovable, and made overtures of conciliation.

At this time I began to apprehend, that we should be plung-

ed into a war with England, in which case it would have become my duty to aid the French as far as my abilities might go; but as I knew their temper, I replied to the advances made, that I was not to be affected by smooth words, so that they must begin by complying with the various demands I had made, and show me by facts that they were well disposed. Shortly after this, I received a volunteer letter from the Commissary of Exterior Relations, (a poor creature, who scarce dared to do anything without an order from the Committee of Safety), assuring me that he had transmitted my various representations to the Commissary of the Marine, and expected soon to give me satisfactory answers. It was written ten days before the death of Robespierre, shortly after which, Mr Monroe arrived. He was fortunate in not reaching France at an earlier period; for, if I may judge by what fell within my observation, he would have been a little too well with that party, to be viewed in a neutral light by their opponents. I *hope* he may succeed in obtaining the redress of those grievances, which our countrymen labored under; but on the 12th of October, when I left Paris, nothing was done. I build my present *hopes*, however, on Mr Jay's treaty, for they will now be somewhat more cautious respecting us than they have been.

In reply to what you say about my return to America, I must tell you, that I could not depart in such season as that my communications could be of much importance, and therefore as I must have exposed myself to the inconveniences of a winter's passage, I deferred my voyage; and the rather, as I have some affairs in London which I wish to wind up. I should have gone thither for that purpose direct, but the French would have harbored jealousies respecting my journey, which for many reasons I wished not to excite, and therefore I came round through Switzerland to this city, in which I am now weather bound. So much for my history.

As to the state of political affairs, the Polish insurrection is, as you know, completely subdued, and of course the attention of Europe is all turned to France, which has lately

triumphed in every quarter by the extreme misconduct of her enemies. It seems at present that they are coming to their senses, and if I am rightly informed, they have at length abandoned the idea of a dismemberment, and mean to pursue simply the re-establishment of the throne. If they act wisely and vigorously in that direction, it seems to me that they must succeed, for the French are wearied and exhausted by the contest. They detest and despise their present rulers, and as far as I have been able to judge, they ardently desire the restoration of their Prince.

You will ask, perhaps, why then do they not restore him? It is because they dare not act, nor even speak, so that they do not know each other's opinions, and of course each individual apprehends from the general mass; but everything which has taken place leaves them to look back with regret to their ancient situation. In judging the French, we must not recur to the feelings of America during the last war. We were in the actual enjoyment of freedom, and fought not to obtain, but to secure its blessings. The people elected their magistrates during the continuance of the war. The property of the country was engaged in the Revolution, and the oppressions which it occasioned were neither great, extensive, nor of long duration.

But in France they have been lured by one idle hope after another, until they are plunged in the depth of misery and servitude; servitude so much the more degrading, as they cannot but despise their masters. I have long, you know, predicted a single despotism, and you have seen how near they have been to that catastrophe. Chance, or rather the want of mettle in the usurper, has alone saved them to the present moment; but I am still convinced, that they must end their voyage in that port, and they would probably reach it, should they make peace with all their foreign enemies, through the channels of a civil war. Adieu, my dear Sir. I wish you many and happy years, and am very truly yours,

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.



LETTERS

AND

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS,

RELATING TO

FRENCH AFFAIRS.

Several of the following papers have been found only in the French language, but commonly in Mr Morris's hand-writing. Some of them seem to have been composed originally in English, and others in French. The translations have been made for the present work.

LETTERS
AND
MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS,
ON
FRENCH AFFAIRS.

OBSERVATIONS
ON GOVERNMENT, APPLICABLE TO THE POLITICAL STATE OF
FRANCE.

Written in Paris, July, 1789.

THAT the French have not those manners, which are suited to a free constitution, is a reflection by no means dishonorable to that nation. It applies with equal force to all others, whose political situation is similar. Voltaire has called his countrymen, *lâches courtisans mais braves guerriers*. Had the despotism been more complete, that moral painter would perhaps have said *vils courtisans et lâches guerriers*.

But whence this deprivation of morals in arbitrary governments? The Almighty, for wise purposes, has formed man in such manner, that he lives not in himself, but in the opinion of others. In monarchies he looks upwards, and each contrives how best to gain the good opinion of his immediate superior. Begin then at the point of the pyramid, where the crown is

placed, and in each degree of descent you will find that, to flatter the prevailing folly or the ruling vice, obtains the good opinion of the superior, and opens the way to fortune. The vulgar, who are at the base of the pyramid, dazzled by the splendor of the great, suffer their opinion to be captivated by show, and adore the idol that is raised for their devotion. With them a golden calf commands the respect, which is due to the Lord of Hosts.

In a republican government, those who wish to be great must begin by obtaining the good opinion of their equals. For this purpose they must be virtuous, or appear so; and the appearance has, generally speaking, the same advantages, as to the community, with the reality; because the example is the same, and because the opportunities of ruining the nation, by vices long concealed, are not frequent. But remark, that the possession or appearance of virtue will not alone suffice. In this kind of government, as in the other, the prevailing follies and vices must be flattered. The Roman must be brave, the Athenian polite, the monk devout; and each must prefer the interest of his society to those of mankind, and the rules of his Order to the principles of justice. In pursuing these reflections, we shall find the source of an important maxim, which Montesquieu has advanced; *That laws and manners have a mutual influence on each other.* To fit us for a republic, as for any other form of government, a previous education is necessary. But what is education? Let us not confound things. Education of the head, learning, pedantry, superstition; these are what the college confers. Education of the heart, manners, these we derive from the society around us. Hence the Dutchman is avaricious, the Englishman proud, the Frenchman vain; and yet each has read the same Livy, the same Cicero, the same Horace.

The education, even the scholastic education, of a free government is more virtuous, because the tutor is obliged to sacrifice to public opinion; and the pupil does not see a horrible contrast of divine precepts and diabolical practices. In free

governments, men are obliged to pay inviolable regard to their promises, because falsehood is a crime which cannot be concealed, and which, as it exposes to infamy, is sure to impede the march towards that greatness, which can only be obtained by public favor. This is a trait of infinite consequence, because men, being able to trust each other, perform cheerfully the part allotted to them, either for the acquirement or for the defence of liberty.

Lastly, in free governments the laws being supreme, and the only supreme, there arises from that circumstance a spirit of order, and a confidence in those laws for the redress of all injuries, public or private. The sword of justice is placed in the hands of the constitutional magistrate, and each individual trembles at the idea of wresting it from his grasp, lest the point should be turned upon his own bosom, or that of his friend. In despotic governments the people, habituated to behold everything bending beneath the weight of power, never possess that power for a moment without abusing it. Slaves, driven to despair, take arms, execute vast vengeance, and then sink back to their former condition of slaves. In such societies the patriot, the melancholy patriot, sides with the despot, because anything is better than a wild and bloody confusion. Those, therefore, who form the sublime and god-like idea of rescuing their fellow creatures from a slavery, they have long groaned under, must begin by instruction, and proceed by slow degrees, must content themselves with planting the tree, from which posterity is to gather the fruit.

But to quit metaphor, which, though it may enforce sentiment, very rarely conveys a clear and precise idea; and leaving these general observations, in order to apply more particularly our investigations to the facts immediately before us, it must be remembered, that, as each individual is governed by the opinion of the public, so each contributes to the formation of that very opinion. Thus, a thing not unfrequent in moral action, the effect becomes, in form, the cause. Those things then, which command the public opinion, command the public.

A reverence for religion gave power to its ministers. Again, destroy at once an opinion, without raising at the same time another, you destroy all which stands connected with that opinion. Bring the people to despise their priests, and their religion is gone, unless you introduce enthusiasm to drive out superstition. The French have a blind deference for their nobles, and a warm attachment for their Prince. Bring them to detest the one and despise the other, what have you gained? A multitude ungoverned, and very soon ungovernable. Will you preach to them as a philosopher, the dignity of man, the empire of reason, the majesty of the laws? You might as well talk of the centripetal and centrifugal forces in the solar system, or the reflection and refraction of the rays of light. To such fine discourses, you will receive your answer from some decollated victim at the *Place de Grève*.

And what end are we to look for as the result of unbridled licentiousness? History tells us of but one. Reason can discover but one. Experience proclaims that it is despotism. If then from history, from reason, from experience, we may derive one lesson, as to our political conduct, we must agree in the propriety of preserving those objects, which now command the reverence of opinion, till time shall raise a new generation, educated in different opinions. Leave to the people a corps, which they may consider as the common enemy, and which may, from that circumstance, unite them in a steady and constant support of the rights of mankind, the object for which they long contend will be endeared by the contest. By degrees they will *feel*, that which now they only *think*, and they will *love* that liberty, which they at present *admire*. A body constantly opposed to the popular wish, nay, constantly laboring to oppress, will save them from their most dangerous enemy. It will save them from themselves. They and their representatives will always be as desirous of oppressing the nobility, as that nobility can possibly be of debasing the people.

In the legislative struggle, where each having a veto neither can prevail, the good of all must be consulted, to obtain the

consent of each. It is not the number of chambers in which laws are discussed which is important, but the spirit which prevails in the discussion; and that prevailing spirit will depend on the prevailing interest. The pride of nobility is offensive; but to whom? Not to the humble. Pride stimulates the *great* to rise. And pride prompts the *little*, who cannot rise, to pull down the mighty from his seat. Reduce the noble, against whom envy now points her arrows, reduce him to the common level, *there remains no other mark but the Prince.*

But in destroying orders, do you destroy the natural inequality of man, or the artificial inequality of society? In attacking one effect, do you remove the general cause? If you cannot alter the nature of man, why not consent to treat him according to that nature? Suppose all distinctions gone, and one body of representatives appointed for this great kingdom, on whom will the choice fall? This question demands a solemn pause. In the answer is involved all future consequences. Will not the rich and the great be chosen? Have wealth and grandeur lost their influence? Have the people of France attained to that philosophic contempt of splendor and riches, which induces men to perish inactive, and starve with tranquillity? The rich and great, possessed of power which is only not absolute because there is a king, will they not desire to remove the only obstacle to the increase of their greatness? Or will pity restrain them from those impositions on the people, which will increase their wealth? Will not a very slight reflection convince us, that the methods pursued by some to overturn the authority of the great, must tend eventually to fix that authority, and to give legal sanction to what is at present perhaps an unjust usurpation? Is it not most wise to put all these enemies in one body together, and not suffer them to elude the vigilance of observation, by dressing in the popular garb? Why suffer the wolves, (if wolves they be) to occupy the place, which should be reserved for the shepherd?

Again, let us not in our zeal for momentary reformation, lose sight of the probable consequences. Where the national char-

acter is base, the national government cannot be pure. Let the legislator then always bear in mind an attention to the means of preserving and exalting the character of his nation. This is particularly needful, when we would form a free constitution. In absolute monarchies, as has already been observed, the Prince gives the tone to all subordinate ranks. Cyrus commands the brave Persians, and Darius the voluptuous. But a free people take, by degrees, their distinctive traits, which are indelible. You would destroy the nobility of France. You say, that the respect paid to a titled fool is misplaced, and that the Condé of today should not be decorated with the insignia of his heroic ancestors. You reason on the equality of mankind, till you believe in it yourself, and become convinced that the whole nation are of your opinion. They think that they believe the same thing, and yet they are deceived. Such rooted sentiments are not to be in a moment eradicated.

But suppose it were as you imagine. Your nation, no longer influenced by the splendor of rank and titles, will pursue more steadily the objects of ambition and avarice. Remember that you are to be free, and have much to apprehend from ambition. You will of course render the acquisition of power difficult, the possession precarious, the abuse fatal, and consequently the pursuit will be confined to those few, whose souls are formed with loftiest views, and who can be happy only in command. Such men there are in all societies, and such will risk all things, and suffer all things, to obtain their darling superiority. The great mass, however, terrified at the rugged ascent, at the uncertain stand, and the tremendous fall, will prefer a humbler walk in life.

Suppose then, that you have arrived at the philosophic situation, where a love of power is repressed, and a love of titles annihilated. You have cut down ambition, and torn up vanity by the roots. What then? Why then the great, rich, fertile, *commercial* kingdom of France is to be under the base dominion of avarice. Everything is to be rated at its price in gold. And do you imagine that liberty will be the only ex-

ception in such a general sale? God has formed man with a variety of passions, but man would be wiser than his Creator, and simplify the principles of human action. Alas! in proportion to his success, will be his misfortune. What shall we think of the musician, who cuts three strings of his violin, and plays upon one? And yet he may plead in excuse, that an instrument with but one string is more easily kept in tune.

Suppose for a moment that man could be reduced to this standard, and that a wise legislature were about to form a constitution of government for such men. Would he not foresee and anxiously provide against the dangerous consequences of that overruling, base, inordinate propensity? And in the midst of this anxiety would he not rejoice to meet with some one, who could awaken the bosoms of his countrymen to new and livelier emotions; to those passions, whose quick and energetic action briskly agitates the national manners, and dissipates all stagnant and putrescent scum? Would he not thank the man, who should give to youth the headlong fury of love, and to manhood the insatiate thirst of applause? When these restless passions prevail, they chase ambition and avarice from the stage. By the prodigality of youth, riches are as lightly squandered, as they were busily or basely collected. And oftentimes the victorious general in catching at a feather lets fall his sword.

But farther, let us suppose an excellent constitution established. This alone is not sufficient. Next year perhaps it will be destroyed. We ought, therefore, to provide as well for the preservation as for the establishment. And how is that to be done? Quit your philosophic closet, and look abroad into the world. Behold those numerous swarms of human insects, all busy, all intent upon some pursuit. What is it, which animates them? Observe a little nearer and you will see that it is interest. No matter whether well or ill understood, no matter whether the object be salutary or pernicious, it is still self-interest, or if you please self-love, which, to obtain that desired object, sets all in motion. Be pleased then to con-

sider, that in society there will always be a great number, who, from their natural propensities or peculiar situation, must feel a direct interest in the overturning of actual establishments.

Here then is a constant cause, which must have its effect, and produce a constant and persevering effort to destroy the constitution. The acting individuals will change forever, but the action will forever be the same. As in a siege, the bullets are successive, but the direction and operation continual. How are we to obviate the fatal consequences of this evil, which is unavoidably interwoven into all possible societies? We may venture to say with geometric certitude, that to a force constantly acting, a similar force must be opposed. To balance this permanent interest, another must be raised equally permanent. An order of men with distinct privileges will feel a constant and regular desire to prevent innovations and change. But a hundred mouths are open to exclaim, why prevent any change? Have not the people a right to alter the constitution and laws as they think proper?

Such questions require no answer with men acquainted with affairs, and to others it is difficult to give an answer which will be understood. Perhaps it is best to ask this other question, why should we have any laws at all? No man will deny, that a government greatly defective and oppressive ought to be changed, and that laws manifestly cruel and unjust ought to be abrogated. But a very little experience will convince any thinking man, that frequent variations in the law are a serious evil, and that frequent changes in the form of government are the most afflicting misfortune. From these must follow a loss of commerce, a decay of manufactures, a neglect of agriculture, and thence poverty, famine, and universal wretchedness. It is not worth while then to dispute about the inherent right, which man enjoys to plunge himself into this situation, for surely all will agree, that to exercise such right is madness in the extreme.

But another violent cry is raised from a different quarter. What beautiful and pathetic dissertations have we not heard,

about the natural equality of mankind ! A thing, which the writers themselves do not believe in, or they would never have taken so much pains to show their own superiority. How unjust that we are not all born Dukes ! True ; but still more unjust that we are not all born Kings. Is the establishment of distinct orders in a monarchy necessary to the national happiness ? If it be, let the establishment be made, or being made, let it be preserved. But you complain that you do not possess nobility. The road is open. Deserve it. But many are noble who never deserve it. True. And many are rich by no better right. You will not violate the laws of property, because it is necessary to the national prosperity that they be held sacred. If then the privileges of a distinct order be equally necessary, why will you violate them ? But you will not impair the rights of property ; why then will you take away from the son those privileges, which his father bought ? Surely the one property should be as sacred as the other. And if you respect the eminence, which was bought, can you despise that which was earned ? If you acknowledge the titles paid for with gold, will you deny those which were purchased with blood ?

Lastly. Examine the history of mankind, and find, if possible, the instance where a monarchy has existed in which the people were free without an intermediate order. If there be none such, consider the vast sum which France must stake upon a new experiment. The happiness or misery of twenty millions. But is it a new experiment ? Has it not been tried ? And have not events demonstrated, that all such trials terminate in despotism ?

NOTE

ADDRESSED TO THE QUEEN OF FRANCE, ON THE COURSE TO
BE PURSUED BY THE KING.

Translation.

January 26th, 1790.

THEY advise the King to present himself to the Assembly, and to place himself, as they say, at the head of the revolution. The trade of a revolutionist appears to me a hard one for a Prince. I did not hesitate to say directly, that it was foolish or perfidious advice. He has gathered but bitter fruits from his intercourse with the Assembly hitherto. Inaction is not only the surest course for him, but the only one which is not extremely dangerous. That they, who fear the consequences of having pushed everything to extremities, should wish to put themselves under the shelter of circumstances, under the shadow of royal authority, is all very natural. That they too, who have commenced the revolution, and who, in attaining their object, see themselves outstripped by their followers, should seek support against the violence which they have excited, is also natural. That the most cunning among them should desire to preserve, for some years, the name of Monarchy, in order the more fully to destroy the substance, is not to be wondered at; but that the Monarch should second these schemes, that he should run headlong into the net, which they spread for him;—Alas, how much he is to be pitied!

But what must he do? Nothing. The children of the Count d'Artois are already out of the kingdom; so the royal family, being no longer entirely within the hands of its enemies, will respect what is there, for fear of what is not there. Let them alone then. In a short time everything will be shaken to its foundation, and those who have poured insult upon the

royal heads, and bitterness into their hearts, will feel in their turn the evils, which they have occasioned.

War will come at the moment, when the general weakness shall promise to the enemy a sure prey. It shall come to rescue the state, and re-establish its affairs. The finances, even in skilful hands, will be benefitted thereby. Means are not wanting to France, it is only the talent to make use of them. But let it not be supposed possible to replace things where they were. No ; France must henceforward have a wise constitution, which assures to the people all the liberty of which they are susceptible, or it must have a frightful tyranny. This last is by no means suited to a wise and benevolent King. We must then have the first, and to attain this, we need only do nothing.

Let the people become disgusted with the novelties of which they are so fond. Time changes everything, and henceforth tranquillity will be in its turn the object most earnestly desired. Then they will come forward to meet the King, and offer him the spoils, which they have wrested from him, and it will depend on him alone to insure forever the happiness of France.

P L A N

OF A CAMPAIGN FOR FRANCE.

Written in June, 1790, and submitted at that time to General Lafayette.

In the present state of Europe, it is natural to ask ;

I. Whether Peace or War be most for the interest of France ?

II. Should the latter take place, a question of equal importance arises as to the manner of prosecuting it.

III. And this again is nearly connected with an inquiry into the means of supporting it.

IV. The objects to be obtained will naturally disclose themselves.

I. The fashionable rage of philanthropy bids us decide, without hesitation, against the horrors of war; but statesmen must be governed by reason, not rhetoric. To the wailings of affected sentiment we might shortly reply, that in the usual course of human affairs a war is inevitable; but the subject demands more particular attention. To form, then, a proper judgment, it will be needful to examine the situation of France; first, in regard to her interior affairs; and, secondly, as to her exterior connexions and relations.

In the former point of view, that which immediately arrests our attention, is a revolution effected as it were by magic; so easily have all ancient forms and establishments been abolished. The preponderating force, which accomplished that miracle, will naturally impress us with a sense of its greatness. But it would argue a profound ignorance of human affairs to suppose, that the same force will be exerted to support the new constitution. All those, who are in uneasy situations, readily flock to the standard of change, and there is an enthusiasm in the first pursuit of freedom, which exceeds calculation. But the instant a regular system is adopted, many of its advocates wish again for something new. Some people would change governments like fashions, from inconstancy of temper; some from the derangement of their affairs, and some from ambition. Reflection on these circumstances will show, that the discontented party must receive accessions of strength, if they have the wisdom to be quiet, till the fervor of the moment has evaporated. The interior divisions, therefore, which have been unhappily excited, demand a serious notice, and the more so from their intimate relation to the finances. These must continue in a state of wretchedness, until order shall be established. But that derangement of the finances, which first opened the way to a change of government, is now unfavorable

to the new order of things ; because it will enable the disaffected to excite murmur and complaints against every tax, which it may be needful to impose. The call for a *contribution patriotique* has been prevented from doing mischief, by the wonderful working of the term *Aristocrat* ; and other measures owe their success to the same cause. But the time approaches, when the torrent of enthusiasm will have spent itself for the want of opposition. Something, therefore, must be done to support the popular ardor ; and there is no word perhaps in the dictionary, which will take the place of *Aristocrat* so readily as *Anglais*.

The dangers just stated are not perhaps the greatest. Anarchy is fatal to freedom. They cannot exist together, and if the former continue for a length of time, it generally ends in despotism, because the people become wearied by the pursuit of what they cannot obtain, and each suffering in turn the want of legal protection, all finally agree to give power in exchange for peace. Hence it follows, that the establishment of order is ardently to be desired. But it cannot be effected without a strong executive authority ; and it is to be feared, that much time may elapse, and many concussions be felt, before that event takes place, unless powerful circumstances be called forth to influence the public opinion.

Neither is it unworthy of attention, that should such circumstances now arise or be produced, the executive authority will be delegated to supporters of the revolution, provided a due share of discretion be used in distinguishing between the advocates for anarchy, and the friends of freedom. But if the present opportunity should slide away, it is not impossible that, by degrees, the whole military force may be acquired by men not over temperate in the use of it.

If we look beyond the limits of France, her Colonies first attract our notice, as being most intimately connected with the metropolis. The situation of things in this respect is unpleasant. The maxims of abstract right established by the Assembly prove a great deal, and it will be difficult to persuade the

colonist, that he should not enjoy the right of seeking his own wealth and happiness in a free trade. In the present posture of affairs, those colonists may decide on their own fate, for they will certainly receive succor from Britain, should that become necessary. It is therefore prudent to treat with them on terms of liberal policy. They will probably demand a free commerce with the United States of America, and perhaps with all the world. If they confine themselves to the former, such limitations may be fixed as that, without injuring either the Colony or parent State, it shall be beneficial to both. If they insist on the latter, the wisest course will be to grant them independence at once, and to guaranty it; inviting the United States to become parties in the guarantee. That example would catch in the British possessions. Perhaps the Colonies would assume a part of the public debt, proportioned to the revenue now drawn from them, and if so, their independence would not be a bad bargain. The terms to be made with them will depend on their temper, and that upon circumstances. *If Britain had declared war, in 1774, against the House of Bourbon, the now United States would have bled freely in her cause.*

Next in order to the Colonies, is the commerce of France. It is her happiness to depend less on foreign trade, than many other nations. With the East she can have little intercourse, because there is little consumption in France for the commodities of India. With her Colonies, even should they become independent, her commerce will be considerable, because they will use her brandies, wines, fruits, oil, vinegar, silks, and fine cloths, and she their sugar and coffee. But her interior commerce is most important. The wealth, which must flow from establishing freedom and free intercourse, throughout the space which nature seems to have allotted for her limits, is almost inconceivable. To derive full benefit from her local advantages, she wants only an accession of commercial capital, and those habits of industry, from which her neighbors have derived their importance. It must however be observed, that if Britain

should establish the claims lately set up against Spain, the commerce of France must suffer severely, and her territorial interests will also be materially affected.

This leads to a consideration of the alliances of France, which, according to the calculations of human prudence, tended to ensure her happiness. If they do not produce that effect, candor must acknowledge that the fault is in her, and not in them. Passionate zealots have indeed complained of the connexion with Austria, and now lately of the family compact; but surely these alliances were wise. Let it be remembered, that Europe will ever be divided into two great parties, so that you have only to choose whether your neighbors shall be for you, or against you. Some talk of an alliance between France and England—between Rome and Carthage. It is not worth while to reason about a thing which cannot happen. The true question therefore is, whether you wish that England, Austria, Flanders, and Spain, shall be allied against France. On this supposition, how would she make head both by land and by sea? Without mentioning St Domingo, without thinking of the Mediterranean trade, let it only be remembered, that under circumstances less unpropitious, Marlborough was in full march for the gates of Paris.

Even in time of peace, the expense of the additional troops to guard her frontiers would be ruinous to France, unless her navy were neglected, and *that* would give her adversaries the uncontrolled dominion of the sea. Britain derives from her insular situation the advantage of not being forced into a land war, unless she thinks proper, or has brought herself into such condition by unwise connexions or engagements. Evidently it is the interest of France to preserve the family compact, and, if possible, to derive benefit instead of sustaining injury from the vicinity of Flanders, unless it can be supposed both practicable and prudent to form a close connexion with Britain. But the first article of such an alliance must be the superiority of one, which the others would not submit to. Ancient rivals in arts and in arms, neither will trust the other; so that they

would be placed in that suspicious relation, which involves the expense of war, without destroying the benefits of peace. Shall it be said that both nations being free, they would from circumstances be friends? Free nations have ever been hostile to each other, from the little Grecian Republics down to those of Italy. The wars of Rome and Carthage convulsed the world. The *delenda est Carthago* has been repeated in the British, and will be repeated in the French Senate. The chance indeed is, that Carthage must be again destroyed, because the resources of trade cannot always avail against a great territorial power.

In the present moment, Britain is determined to give law to the allies of France, upon the principle that she cannot, or will not, perform her engagements to them. The affairs of Holland have given a severe lesson, that allies when abandoned become dangerous enemies, and the wise will learn prudence from misfortune. If, therefore, either the foreign or domestic affairs of France be duly considered, it will appear proper to take a decisive part in the affairs of Europe, and exert her utmost force to preserve that rank to which she is entitled, that good faith which ought to be her glory, and that interior tranquillity which can alone secure her happiness.

II. The manner of prosecuting a war falls next under consideration. And here it becomes proper to consider the instruments which she possesses, and the operations of which they are capable.

France has a numerous militia, but her army is not numerous nor well disciplined, and her navy cannot act extensively from the want of resources. What can be done by such instruments?

As Poland and Prussia come into the war this campaign to the aid of the Porte, the war in Flanders must be particularly distressing to Austria. A powerful diversion against the Turk, might enable the imperial courts to possess themselves of a part of Poland, and Austria might recover Silecia. Hence it would seem, that a cession to France of his rights to the Low Countries

might be obtained from the King of Hungary, and that the troops now serving there might also be obtained, as auxiliaries to France. A squadron from Toulon and Carthage, with French and Spanish troops, could proceed to the neighborhood of Constantinople, and, having secured a proper post, could so far obstruct the communication with Egypt and the Archipelago, as to straiten that city for subsistence. Very probably, too, the appearance of a considerable force might excite the Greek Christians to revolt. By such powerful diversions the places acquired from the Turk by the imperial courts would be secured, and they might turn the principal part of their force against Sweden and Prussia. If the Elector of Bavaria would be induced to take part in the quarrel, the advantage is evident. Great Britain, having no port in the Mediterranean, could not without great hazard oppose the operations in that quarter.

Should such treaty take effect, it ought to remain secret until the moment of operation arrives, but it would be proper immediately to march a considerable body of French troops to the neighborhood of Calais and Dunkirk, and there to construct vessels to be worked by oars, and to carry in their bows what the Russians call *Licornes*, which, by discharging *Brandts-wogles*, set ships on fire. Common coasting vessels would answer this purpose, with very little alteration. It would be proper to prepare some flat-bottomed boats, to carry light cannon on deck, and high enough to scour the country from the canals of Flanders and Holland. The object of this armament should be to menace the Island of Britain, but in fact to attack Amsterdam. The vessels first mentioned could go round into the Texel, and enter that city from the sea side. The ships would make but little resistance. The other vessels would be employed in the interior navigations. By menacing Britain, she would be obliged to keep some ships at home, and to call out her militia. This would greatly enhance her expense, and at the same time her attention would be drawn from the place, on which alone an attack should be made. The

regiments in the French service, speaking the German language, should be brought by degrees upon the frontiers of Flanders.

If the attempt on Amsterdam succeeds, the advantages speak for themselves. If it does not, perhaps Rotterdam might be secured, which is a place of infinite importance to the enemy, and in connexion with it must be considered Dordrecht and Gorcum. At any rate it might be possible to secure Flushing, and such other parts of the Dutch territory near Antwerp, as impede the navigation of the Scheldt. Or in the last resource, these troops might be useful in the main design against Flanders.

With respect to this, it would seem proper to enter the country the beginning of October, (as subsistence would then be abundant,) in two columns of regular troops; the one upon the sea coast from Lisle, so as to secure Newport, Ostend, and Ecluse, and then march through Bruges and Ghent to Antwerp. The other column to descend along the Sambre, and joining the Austrians at Namur, endeavor to possess both Liège and Maestricht. The last might perhaps be easily taken with the aid of money, and when taken would form the advance point to be opposed to the troops of Prussia, Holland, and perhaps England and Hanover; for both may be brought up the Meuse with ease and expedition. A great body of militia might at the same time march by different routes to Brussels, and if the King should go in person, attended by a part of the Parisian militia, it would not be productive of bad consequences. By bringing them frequently into severe skirmishes, some would make good troops, and the others become reconciled to having regular armies for the defence of France. It is needless to say, that the force at Maestricht should be great; for the possession of it and that of Antwerp being duly preserved, and the various communications attended to, the whole country would be easily defended; and, as the state of the inhabitants would be better under the French constitution, than under their wretched aristocratic hierarchy, the chance is, that they would themselves fight against their present allies. At any rate, the

parties would be well balanced. The French property, with moderate taxes on the people, would pay the charges of the campaign.

In turning from hence towards the western world, it seems desirable that Spain should immediately send a considerable force to Newfoundland. By taking the seamen, and destroying the ships on that station, a heavy blow would be struck at the British marine. This same fleet might also interrupt the homeward bound ships from the West Indies, all of which sail by the middle of July, and pass near to Newfoundland. France might send to Brest the Irish troops in her service, with some French regiments, and quarter several regiments of cavalry in Britany, under pretence of disturbances in that quarter, and plots of the Aristocratic faction. A vigorous press might also be made in the large cities, (Paris in particular) and all idle vagabonds be sent on board the fleet, which should be double manned, one half being of these people. The declared object might be to defend the French Islands, and additional clothing for the troops taken on board. Their fleet might sail in the end of October, and go far to the southwestward, because at that time of the year there is a certainty of westerly winds. The British home fleet would then naturally sail for the Islands, and of course stand away to the southward, to get within the tropics. The armament from Brest, (after going a hundred leagues to the westward,) might return to Torbay. The troops landed there might, by sudden movement, get possession of Plymouth, and extend from the city of Exeter across to the Irish channel. The impressed men might then be turned over to the French regiments. The Irish regiments might get many recruits in Cornwall, and the officers and privates of the cavalry being brought over from St Malo's, might be readily and well mounted in that part of Great Britain. The line across the Island could be easily defended, and the possession of Plymouth would be the means of intercepting totally the British commerce.

It would be proper to send over, after the first attack, at

least a thousand Chasseurs, excellent marksmen. Should this expedition be successful, a proclamation releasing the people from all internal taxes, and reducing the duties on wine and brandy one half, would induce many of them to favor the invasion; and by means of the contraband commerce thus laid open, not only the revenue of Great Britain would be injured, but a considerable sum would be received from those low duties; probably sufficient to defray the expense of the armament. In the supposition that the great object of Flanders should be obtained, and this descent be effected, another descent near London might still be threatened, or from Dieppe to Brighthelmstone; this would prevent the detaching of force to the westward, or oblige the enemy to double his efforts. Add to this, that a long march in December, with a January campaign, could only tend to destroy his army, without effecting his object.

Secresy in design, and suddenness in execution, are essential requisites to success. Britain may, and probably will, attempt a different operation. With Prussian and Dutch troops on one quarter, and a large body of British and Hanoverian troops on another, joined to the Flemish, it is not impossible to make the river Somme the northern boundary of France; especially if England has, as there is some reason to suspect, a considerable party among the disaffected in French Flanders and Artois. If France, therefore, instead of going into, is drawn into the war, it will be perhaps for the defence of her capital, which is on that side wholly uncovered, from St Quintin southward, except by the river Oise. A landing might easily be effected in Picardy, or near Boulogne, and then the French garrison must surrender the fortified towns in Flanders to one set of assailants, or leave the whole country and the capital open to the other.

III. It may however be said, that although the situation of France renders war in a manner inevitable, yet such is the derangement of her finances, that it is to be avoided at every hazard, and almost at every loss. This objection leads us to in-

quire into the means by which a war can be supported. And here we must suppose a failure in the designs abovementioned, and we must found no expectancy upon the restoration of credit. Neither must we be flattered by those appearances, which have resulted from issuing the Assignats. They are fallacious. The Assignats are a paper currency, which is a legal tender, bearing interest, and founded on the future sale of lands. They carry therefore a legal evidence of inferiority to coin. The premium of interest will not be equal to the loss by depreciation, consequently will not prevent depreciation; which is inevitable, because few are desirous of acquiring land in comparison to the many who want to purchase other things. The public, especially, have many wants, and their resources from taxation must be retarded by a depreciating currency, since it is every one's interest to delay that payment, whose value is daily diminished. And for the like reason, the public expenses will be accelerated, because no one will give credit. But expenses accelerated and enhanced, with revenues retarded and diminished, must destroy all equilibrium.

This being then the inevitable result, we ought to guard against it. For this purpose, an idea long since advocated might now be adopted. The public debts might be founded upon particular revenues, and the public service be provided for by others. These last should be payable only in specie; and since, in time of war, each citizen owes his service to the community, a poll tax on the men not in actual military service, might come in to the relief of extraordinary expenses.

Many other taxes might be imposed; for instance, on male domestics, on carriages and horses of pleasure, on cards and dice, on the use of ardent spirits, on legacies, and on sales of lands, a general stamp tax, &c.; none of which would be oppressive; and there are particular resources, among which may be reckoned a share in prizes made by ships of war.

But one of the greatest resources consists in the kind of war, which, though expensive to the enemy, would cost little to France. The Islands would be secured by the incapacity of

the enemy to send a force against them, and even if taken, must be restored at the peace. Having no possession in India, no expense need be incurred on that account; but ships of war, attacking the British commerce to that country, might even produce money to the treasury. The French commerce might for a while be wholly restrained, and individuals be encouraged to fit out strong vessels of war, which would be a good annoyance. It would perhaps be wise not to risk naval engagements, and whenever any of the enemy's vessels were taken, the seamen should by all means be secured, and should not be exchanged, but sent into the interior country, and there employed in such manner as to alter their habits of seamanship; and as the northern powers are at war, the British will find it extremely difficult to procure sailors both for their commerce and marine. But if the former suffer, the latter must be impaired from the want of money, as in the other case from the want of men. And if from any cause the navy of Britain be considerably reduced, she then loses the great advantage of her insular position. Should they make a similar disposition of French seamen, it would involve them in great difficulties; for it would be easy to approach the place where the French seamen might be, and of course to favor their escape. Unless every party was well guarded the keepers would frequently be subdued, and the expense of such numerous guards would be oppressive.

In looking back it will give some satisfaction, perhaps, to the philosophic mind, to observe that success in the measures just mentioned would give freedom to Flanders, and perhaps to Holland. That the condition of Poland might be mended. That, possibly, Greece might be liberated from the Turkish, and India from the British yoke. That, by opening the navigation of the Black Sea, a new theatre will be displayed for commercial industry. And that, in shaking the Ottoman Empire to its centre, Egypt might become independent, and the piratical powers of Barbary be restrained.

Lastly. If France should, (with the loss of all her Colonies

and a great addition of debt,) get possession of Flanders, and establish the free navigation of the Scheldt ; if, above all, she should firmly fix a free constitution, she will be a vast gainer by the conflict, and must from that moment be considered as the greatest and happiest nation on earth.

NOTE

WRITTEN FOR THE COUNT DE MONTMORIN, CONTAINING SUGGESTIONS RESPECTING A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT.

Translation.

The date of this paper is uncertain, but it was handed to the Count de Montmorin before the 25th of May, 1791.

In the present state of France, it is impossible to establish a moderate government. Between hereditary royalty, and representatives chosen for two years, the struggle cannot be of long duration. If, then, the King can preserve, or rather regain the means of preserving order, he will soon be master. If, on the contrary, they persist in making barriers against what they call the abuse of authority, Monarchy is at an end. Force must succeed anarchy, and then the most successful commander will have the most extensive authority. There is no doubt, that the Royal Family will be previously expelled, and if it is ever re-established, that event, always uncertain, cannot take place except after a long interval.

Men are governed only by force, or by opinion, and force ever depends only upon opinion. Thus, between absolute and moderate governments, there is no other difference, than that of opinion, more or less general. Under the first, everything depends upon the army ; under the second, upon the mass of good citizens, who call themselves the

people. When there is no longer a government, there is no longer a people. It is then the populace which governs, because it is that, which, having nothing to lose, hopes to gain everything, and which thus becoming the only active force, alone inspires terror.

Nothing is more wretched, than the sad necessity of becoming master, or of remaining a slave, more especially as the most despotic sultan is always governed by his own instruments, and trembles at the appearance of the force, which intimidates his subjects. It would then be consistent equally with goodness and wisdom, for a virtuous prince to establish a constitution, which would reconcile the interests of the monarch with those of his people. In France, this would be even indispensable, since the generally diffused ideas would not permit a very severe regime long to exist.

But at the present moment it is necessary to choose between two extremes. It is necessary to be all, or nothing. The choice being made, it remains to be known what are the means of escaping from this paralysis, with which the government has been struck. If the chiefs of the opposition were virtuous, but misguided, the thing would perhaps be impossible; but everything is to be hoped from the dispositions, which have hitherto destroyed everything. Considering themselves out of the administration, they have endeavored to plunder it in the hope of partaking of its spoils. A coalition has in fact been made between opposite parties, in the fear lest authority should be strengthened by their mutual opposition; and the object of this union seems to be, to place the King in the unhappy posture of losing all, or granting all to them. No doubt these same persons would desert their constituents, if they could hope to derive any advantage therefrom.

The step to be taken, then, is simple. It is necessary to secure, *not the coalition*, but the violent, (*enragés*) because it is necessary to have those who cause fear, not those who feel it. For this purpose you must give to the chiefs of the Ja-

cobins the hope of entering into the administration of affairs. You must promise it, and you must keep your word. As soon as they are persuaded, that the way is open, they will cause the decree of four years to be revoked, and will also decree the re-eligibility. These form the grand basis of every good operation. You must give these gentlemen places *at a favorable moment*, give them all necessary confidence, always keeping *the secret*. You must displace them likewise *at a favorable moment*, always gaining something, in proportion as circumstances shall require a greater trust of power in the hands of the king. The populace, always inconstant, will not hesitate to break the idols of their worship. By preceding them a little, you will have the appearance of leading them, and by that means you will direct them; because the weak, that is to say, the great majority of mankind, unite themselves to those who appear to be the strongest.

LETTER

TO THE COUNT DE MONTMORIN, ON THE STATE OF PUBLIC
AFFAIRS.

Translation.

May 25th, 1791.

I desire, my dear Count, before leaving Paris, * to say one more word to you on the posture of affairs; and I put you to the trouble of reading this letter, rather than to occupy a few more minutes of your time in conversation.

You answered me very well the other day by asking me,

* Four days after the date of this letter Mr Morris left Paris for London.

‘who then are the persons, who, at the present moment, stand well with the people?’ If it were as easy as it is difficult to reply to your question, it would still remain to be known how many days these same persons would preserve the good will of the people, or rather of the populace. I do not conceal from myself the difficulty, as you perceive. But I beg you, at the same time, to attend to another matter, which is very clear. You know very well that there are men, and women too, who are detested, very unjustly, but still very heartily, and in all sincerity. Now it is very possible, that we may not make a good choice, but still it will be well to change. When the new comers grow unpopular, it will be necessary to change again, since the objection will be always against the subalterns, and not against the chiefs.

I am fully persuaded, that if the persons whom you like preserve their stations for some months longer, public affairs will be re-established. Already it begins to be apparent, that anarchy will soon destroy everything, unless some remedy be speedily applied. This remedy is the authority of a chief, and as everything depends on opinion, some time is necessary to make the people feel this great truth.

In the mean time I earnestly beg you to consider, that the Assembly, that the departments, have solicited the removal of several persons, that the disorders inseparably connected with a depreciated currency will constantly fall on the lower classes of society, that thenceforth we shall see arise a sort of division, between the partizans of the old and new regime; perhaps between the King and the Assembly; for it cannot be doubted, that each will endeavor to throw the blame on the other. If, at this moment, the court finds itself surrounded with those, who have drawn upon themselves the unjust hatred of the populace, who shall answer for the consequences, particularly if France is at the same time threatened from without? You know the combinations, which the malevolent have long been making, and you will see that the good father Duchene, whom I have the honor to present to you, begins already to instruct his dear flock in them.

Adieu. I promise myself the pleasure of seeing you tomorrow at your coffee-house, and I shall then beg you to return me this paper, with two other little pieces which you recollect.

P. S. It is always necessary to remember, that it is no longer a question of liberty; it is simply, who shall be master. If I could feel easy, with respect to the fate of the Royal Family, I should still be apprehensive for that of France, if it is determined, (to make use of a fashionable expression,) to change the dynasty.

NOTE

COMMUNICATED TO THE COUNT DE MONTMORIN.

Translation.

July 30th, 1791.

Would it not be well, that the King and Queen should forbid every one to speak to them on the subject of the Constitutional Charter, and the Ministers from taking any part in it, and that this restriction should be known to every one? The reason to be given, is a very simple one. *'We would not influence or prejudice the question, since it is agitated in a solemn convention between the nation and its chief.'*

These are the consequences of such a step.

The Assembly, in the uncertainty as to what line of conduct the King may pursue, will have another motive to grant him some authority. Then the persons, who are suspected of influencing his conduct and that of the Queen, will be clear of the affair, even in public opinion, and that is necessary. Finally, his Majesty will preserve the means of acting in the sequel with more dignity. It may be, that he will decide to accept it, but it is not necessary that this decision should be

known. Certainly it is necessary to make some observations upon the articles, but not to have the trouble of speaking of them before they are decreed. The King will yet have a fair opportunity, and it will be possible for him, by wise and noble conduct, to regain all he ought to desire. The future will present the harvest of the seed which is now sown.

SPEECH

COMPOSED FOR THE KING OF FRANCE, WITH SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE CONSTITUTION.

The first Constitution of France was more than two years under deliberation by the National Assembly before it was completed; that is, from June seventeenth, 1789, to September third, 1791. Several weeks, however, before it was completed, it was presumed, that such would be the result, and that this Constitution would be accepted by the King. A draft of it was already before the public, and it became a question with the Ministry, or with certain individuals among the King's friends, whether it should be adopted by him, without an expression of his or their sentiments on some of its more prominent features.

It was probably at the suggestion of the Count de Montmorin, that Mr Morris drew up the following SPEECH and OBSERVATIONS, intended to be delivered by the King to the National Assembly, on the occasion of his taking the oath to observe the constitution. This paper was handed to the Count de Montmorin on the twenty-seventh of August, and returned to Mr Morris again on the eighteenth of October. Meantime the King took the oath on the fourteenth of September, without reservation, or any public declaration of his views, this course having doubtless been deemed the most expedient by his counsellors.

Gentlemen,

It is no longer your King who addresses you. Louis the Sixteenth is only a private individual. You have just offered him the crown, and informed him on what conditions he must accept it.

I assure you, Gentlemen, that if I were a stranger to France, I would not mount the slippery steps of the throne. But the blood, which flows in my veins, does not permit me to be insensible to the fortunes of the French. Descended from a long line of Kings, the remembrance of those who are no more, the rights of future generations, and my paternal love for the people whom Divine Providence has once placed in my care, everything, in fine, forbids me to abandon my post. I must at least maintain it, so as to secure you from anarchy, and from civil war. In this perilous position, I have taken counsel only of my own conscience. It is this, which has decided me to accept your Constitution. May it ensure the tranquillity of the kingdom, and contribute to its prosperity!

France, in granting you its entire confidence, has placed you in possession of the whole power. You have therefore become responsible, before the throne of the Almighty, for the happiness of this immense people, whose fortune is in your hands. I have been a King. Nothing remains to me now, either of authority or of influence. Yet I have a last duty to fulfil. It is that of imparting to you my reflections on your work. I pray you to hear them with serious attention.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE CONSTITUTION.

Previous to any examination of the Constitution, it is proper to acknowledge, in the most explicit manner, the eternal maxim of reason and justice, *that all government ought to be instituted and exercised for the benefit of the people.* And, parting from that principle, we should in any particular society seek that form of government, which is best calculated to protect its citizens against foreign invasion, and secure domestic tranquillity, with the enjoyment of liberty and property.

You have determined on a hereditary monarchy, and by that means you have the certainty, that the chief executive magistrate must ever desire the prosperity of France. A King of France can have no interest distinct from that of the people. Their happiness, their power, and their glory must necessarily be the source of his. Every other public person may have other objects; but your King can aggrandize himself only by increasing the wealth and influence of the nation. He may be mistaken, and he may be misled, but he cannot be bought. It is the misfortune of his situation to see with the eye and act with the hands of others; it is, therefore, evidently his interest, that the representatives of the people should watch over his Ministers, and that they should be punished for misconduct, whether arising from incapacity or any other cause. He cannot but wish also for a strict and regular administration of justice, since that is alike necessary to his glory and to the national prosperity.

These are among the advantages of hereditary monarchy. Whether you have provided against the evils to which it is liable, and secured the good of which it is susceptible, is a question deeply interesting to France, and to the human race.

You begin with a declaration of the rights of man, but since the instruments of this sort, which have hitherto appeared, have occasioned much metaphysical discussion, it may well be supposed, that a King whose occupations require a knowledge of man, such as he exists, and not such as he may be imagined in abstract contemplation, is little fitted to decide on the merit of such compositions. There seems, however, to be some inconvenience in joining it to a constitution, because if the constitution secures those rights, whatever they may be, it is unnecessary, and otherwise it is useless; but there is in every case the risk of seeming contradictions. Controversies may thence arise, and whoever may be the judge of such controversies, becomes thereby arbiter of the constitution.

To show that this inconvenience is not imaginary, it will perhaps suffice to recal to your recollection the first article of your declaration, that '*men are born and exist free and equal in rights.*' You have decided, however, that the representatives shall be distributed among the eighty three departments, according to the three proportions of *Territory, Population, and Direct Taxes.* It results, therefore, that a given number of men, in one of the departments, will have the rights of electing more representatives, than the same number in another department. They might then imagine, that they are not equal in the very important right of choosing the members of the Legislative body.

You have also declared, that '*the law is the expression of the general will; that all citizens have the right of concurring personally, or by their representatives, in its formation; and that, all citizens, being equal in the eye of the law, are equally admissible to all dignities, places, and public employments, without other distinction than that of virtues and talents.*' On the other hand you have established, '*that to be an effective citizen, it is requisite to pay, in some part of the Kingdom, a direct tax, at least equal to the value of three days' labor, and that no one can be an elector unless he unites with the necessary conditions for being an effective citizen, that of paying a direct tax of* *days' labor.*' In reconciling these various clauses, it may be doubted whether the first is to be regarded as an inalienable right, or if, on this hypothesis, the second is a just modification of it.

You have also declared, '*that for the maintenance of the public forces, and for the expenses of the government, a general tax is indispensable, and that it ought to be equally distributed among all the citizens, according to their ability;*' and yet by your constitution you delegate '*exclusively to the legislative body the right of imposing public taxes, of determining the nature and quality thereof, and the mode of collecting them.*' Now, as many taxes, and particularly those which are called indirect, are distributed among the citizens, not according to

their ability, but according to what they consume, and even to their most urgent necessities, it may happen, that your declaration may become, in regard to imposts for a part of the citizens, the ground of a serious complaint.

Without farther considering the collateral circumstances, it is proper now to examine the organization and the distribution of the legislative, executive, and judiciary powers. According to the declaration of rights *'every society wherein the separation of powers is not determined has no constitution.'* That the separation of powers is of great importance cannot, indeed, be denied. It is necessary then to examine, whether you have provided for it in such a manner, that no one of them can encroach in the others. Commencing with the LEGISLATIVE POWER, you have decreed as follows ;

ART. I. The National Assembly, forming the Legislative body, is permanent, and is composed of only one chamber. In case of the King's refusing his assent to the decrees of the Legislative body, this refusal is only suspensive, and when the two legislatures, succeeding that which shall have presented the decree, shall have successively presented the same decree in the same terms, the King shall be considered to have given it his sanction.

ART. II. The Legislative body cannot be dissolved by the King. The representatives of the nation are inviolable. They can for a criminal deed be arrested in the act, or by virtue of an order of arrest, but notice shall be given thereof without delay to the Legislative body, and the prosecution cannot be continued until after the Legislative body shall have decided, that there is ground for accusation.

ART. III. The Legislative body has the right of police in the place of its sessions, and in the compass around, which it shall have determined upon. It has the right of disposing of the forces, which by its own consent are quartered in the city, when it shall hold its sessions ; and the Executive power cannot introduce, or quarter, any body of troops of the line

within the distance of thirty thousand toises from the Legislative body, except by its requisition or authority.

‘ART. IV. The Constitution delegates exclusively to the Legislative body the power of prosecuting before the High National Court, the responsibility of the Ministers, and principal agents of the Executive power. No Minister in place, or out of place, can suffer a criminal prosecution for an act of his administration, without a decree of the Legislative body.

‘ART. V. Whenever the King shall have pronounced or confirmed the suspension of Administrators or Sub-administrators, he shall inform the Legislative body thereof. That body can either remove the suspension, or confirm it, or even dissolve the culpable administration, and if there be cause send all the members of it, or a part of them, to the criminal tribunals, or issue a decree of accusation against them. The tribunals cannot summon the members of an administration before them for official acts.

‘ART. VI. When, after two appeals, the judgment of the third tribunal shall be questioned, upon the same grounds as the two first, the case cannot be farther acted upon in the tribunal of appeal, (Tribunal de Cassation) without having been submitted to the Legislative body, which shall issue a decree explanatory of the law, to which the tribunal shall be bound to conform. The Minister of Justice shall state to the tribunal of appeal, through the medium of the King’s Commissioner, the acts by which the judges may have exceeded the bounds of their power. The tribunal shall annul them, and if there is ground for impeachment, notice shall be given to the Legislative body, who shall grant the decree of accusation, and send the accused before the High National Court.

‘ART. VII. War cannot be decided upon without a decree of the Legislative body. It belongs to the Legislative body to ratify treaties of peace, of alliance, and of commerce, and no treaty can take effect without such ratification.’

By the first article, the whole legislative authority is vested in a single chamber of representatives, and consequently the

leaders of a majority in that Assembly may dictate such laws as they think proper. The King may indeed suspend the decrees for a given period, but history furnishes instances of nations, which have for a longer period been under the influence of faction, and if France should ever be in that situation, the King, by suspending the decrees, would only prolong the disorder without avoiding the mischief. A dangerous law may be adroitly framed, so as to suit the popular taste, and the rejection of it might be represented as a ministerial despotism. It is, therefore, to be feared, that if the Assembly should wish to encroach on the executive authority, a *suspensive veto* would make but a feeble resistance. The time, for instance, may arrive in which a law obliging Ministers to obey such Committees, as shall be appointed to superintend their respective departments, will be represented as essential to the public safety. Rumors of disaffection may be spread abroad, and the people be led to suspect the intentions of their King, even though his whole life should have been a constant endeavor to procure their happiness. It will then give them pleasure to see the power taken from him, who is essentially their friend, and bestowed on those who have no other object but their private interest.

On the other hand, what are the evils to be apprehended from giving to the first executive magistrate an absolute veto? He cannot, without the consent of the Assembly, extend his own authority; and if that consent be supposed, it is a matter of indifference whether his veto be suspensive or absolute. In a well ordered society, new laws are seldom necessary, either for the purposes of police, or of distributive justice; and if they were, how can we doubt of the King's consent? The laws for imposing taxes, and for the public defence, will naturally also receive his assent. It is only, therefore, in the case of an attack upon his constitutional authority, that a right of rejection would be exercised. The knowledge that such right exists would frequently prevent the attempt, in like manner as the hope of eventual success, where the rejection is only for a

limited time, would frequently invite it. In the one case, peace and order may be expected ; in the other, turbulence and tumult.

By the second article it is provided, that the Assembly shall exist, and the persons of the members be held sacred, so long as a majority may think proper. If, therefore, such majority should harbor dangerous designs, there seems to be no means of terminating their session, nor of punishing the guilty, but by general insurrection, or civil war. It is of the nature of absolute power to corrupt the heart, and if there be temptation and indemnity, guilt may ensue. Should a faction be hired by our enemies to sacrifice the national interest and honor, to withhold the needful means of defending the State, or of supporting its credit, the King has no constitutional method of appealing to the people, neither can any tribunal punish the traitors, without the consent of their accomplices. History informs us, that, both in ancient and modern times, the leaders of popular Assemblies have been bought by foreign powers, and that thus nations unconquerable by arms, have become the victims of seduction.

By the third article it is provided, that the Assembly shall command such number of troops at the place of their sessions, as they think proper ; consequently, they may possess themselves of the means at once to awe the people, and imprison the King. His person will be in their hands ; his life at their disposal ; and though he may have the courage to disregard his own life, yet his wife, his children, the dearest objects of his heart, remain also in their power. If, then, some future Assembly should be desirous of changing the form of government, and of assuming greater powers than those, which you have thought proper to delegate, it seems that neither of the other departments, nor even the people themselves, have any means of resistance.

By the fourth article, the Ministers and other agents of the executive authority are exposed to criminal prosecution by the Assembly, and secured against such prosecution from eve-

ry other quarter. Therefore, should the Assembly incline to make encroachments, the Ministers in opposing them would have much to fear, but by submission would be sure of indemnity.

By the fifth article, the authority of the King over those charged with the administration is rendered subordinate to that of the Assembly. He is, as it were, the public accuser. The Legislative body is authorised to judge *their* conduct, and consequently to judge *his*. Administrators protected by the leaders of the Assembly, if such should ever exist, may not only disregard his orders, but even dictate to him the conduct he shall pursue. If the taxes should be either burthensome or disagreeable to several departments, and the administration prove remiss in collecting them, the executive power is in the sad necessity of seeing the public interest sacrificed by their neglect, or of rendering itself odious by more vigorous measures. In both cases the Ministers will be at the mercy of the Assembly, who may accuse them for not having suspended the administration, or, by taking off the suspension, degrade the executive authority. Under such circumstances of absolute dependence, the Minister, although appointed by the King, must obey the orders of those, who can influence a majority of the Assembly, and consequently that part of the executive authority now in question, though vested nominally in him, resides really in them. And the administrators, certain that they cannot be cited before the tribunals, unless previously accused by the Assembly, will frequently consider rather how to please those whom they have cause to fear, than how to perform their duty to the State.

By the sixth article, the judiciary power, in the last resort, is given to the Assembly; for a decree declaring what the law is in a given case, is only another name for a judgment in such case. The *Tribunal de Cassation* being obliged to conform, its subsequent proceedings are merely ministerial, to clothe the decree in the form of a sentence, and to cause the execution. From hence it results, that the people will no longer enjoy that security in their property and possessions, to which

they are entitled ; for it may happen, that many judgments of the *Tribunal de Cassation* will have been submitted to, before the case supposed in the article occurs, and that afterwards the Assembly may decree contradictorily to the tribunal, in which case the preceding judgments will doubtless be questioned. Moreover, as it is not to be supposed that a numerous Assembly will consist of persons skilled in legal discussions, it may happen that their explanatory decrees will effect the whole system of jurisprudence. There is reason to fear also, that their decisions may be influenced by the acts of intrigue, or other motives. The Assembly having reserved to itself the sole right of accusing the judges for misconduct, timid or corrupt judges will decide in favor of those, who have influence with the Assembly, and against the poor and unprotected.

By the seventh article, the Assembly has reserved to itself the rights of war, peace, treaties, so that the King is merely their agent, with this difference, that (not being previously instructed) he must act under the uncertainty of being approved or disavowed. From the changeableness of the representatives, the opinion of the Assembly must be unstable. Moreover, it is hardly to be expected, that persons taken from the ordinary occupations of life, will possess the information needful to judge of foreign politics, and its various combinations. The opinions of men, also, depend much on their respective habits and professions. Some, therefore, would sacrifice everything to the honor of the nation, some its commerce, and some its tranquillity.

By collecting together in one point of view the various powers given to the legislative body, it appears that they have the right to make laws and decide in the last resort, both on the application and execution of them ; that they have the supreme right of war, peace, and treaties ; that they have an existence dependent only on their own will, power to protect themselves from the pursuit of justice, and the command of such force as they may think proper ; of course all power not already vested in them is exposed to their assumption. It may

indeed be said, that there is no just reason to suppose the representatives of a free people will prolong their political existence, assume extraordinary powers, or become instruments of foreign ambition; but history informs us, that such representatives have existed, and therefore they may again exist. And since the formation of a constitution and laws presupposes human depravity, we must calculate on the effects of those passions, which have ever influenced the conduct of mankind.

The next in order is the **EXECUTIVE POWER**, about which you have decreed;

‘**ART. I.** To the King is delegated the care of watching the external safety of the kingdom, to maintain its rights and possessions. It belongs to the King to conclude and sign with all foreign powers, all treaties of peace, of alliance, of commerce, and other conventions, which he shall judge necessary to the welfare of the State, under the ratification of the Legislative body.

‘**ART. II.** The King appoints two thirds of the Rear Admirals, half of the Lieutenants General, Field Marshalls, Captains of vessels, and Colonels of household troops; the third of Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels, and the sixth of Lieutenants of vessels.

‘**ART. III.** Administrators are agents elected for a period by the people, to exercise under the superintendence and authority of the King the administrative duties. The King has the right of annulling acts of Administrators of departments, contrary to the laws, or to orders issued to them, and can in case of obstinate disobedience, or if they compromise by their acts the public safety, or tranquillity, suspend them from their offices. He shall inform the Legislative body thereof, and that body may remove or confirm the suspension. The executive power directs and superintends the collection and the disposition of the taxes, and gives all necessary orders to that effect.

‘ART. IV. The officers of the National Guards are elected for a period, and cannot be re-elected, except after an interval of service as soldiers.’

In considering the executive power of a State, it is proper to examine the object for which such power is instituted, because the means should always be proportioned to the end. Now the object is to defend the State, and enforce obedience to the laws. To accomplish this, the members of every department must be perfectly obedient to the chief, who then, and then only, can be responsible for the conduct of affairs. It results also from the nature of this authority, and from that accountability, which the nation has a right to require, that it should be derived from one head, and that in every instance, there should be one principal, or superior. For if a Council, or Committee, be charged with the whole, or any part of the executive department, it may happen, first, that so much time will be consumed in deliberations, that the business will be neglected. Secondly, that their conduct will vacillate according to the attendance of the different members. Thirdly, that the needful secrecy cannot be preserved, since not only each member, but the Secretaries and Clerks also must be privy to their decisions, because the will of a Board is expressed only by the record of its deliberations. Fourthly, that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to render them accountable, since each will give plausible reasons for his vote, so that though the general conduct be manifestly wrong, no one in particular can be convicted. Whereas it is, as has been already noticed, essential to the public safety, that Ministers should be punished as well for incapacity as for misconduct.

It has already been noted, also, that perfect obedience is necessary from every inferior, but to obtain it, the chief should have power to appoint and to remove the subordinate officers. In common life this is necessary to every man, who employs others either in his own affairs, or in those committed to his management. And if this be needful in those small concerns,

where the principal can daily superintend his agents, how much more so for him, who must employ many for various purposes, and at considerable distances; for a King, in short, whose duty it is to protect the French against foreign invasion, and to maintain their internal tranquillity; a King, who, in the pursuit of their interest, which is one and the same with his own, must at every step encounter the opposition of private views.

By applying these evident principles of common sense to the four articles just cited, it will appear how far your constitution is calculated to confer on the people of France those benefits, of which a hereditary monarchy is susceptible. By the first, the right of war, peace, and treaties, is granted to the Assembly, and the King must act not only in subordination to their will, but also in uncertainty as to what that will may be. From hence results the difficulty, if not impracticability, of making any treaty at all. Who will enter into stipulations with a Prince, who cannot bind those whom he represents? The communication of powers is a usual preliminary, even to the conversations which precede a treaty. Suppose, for instance, that the King, apprehending the aggression of several powers allied against France, should endeavor to form with other powers a defensive alliance, each of these might be obliged to reject his overtures from regard to its own safety, because the treaty being made and submitted to, the Assembly would, if not approved of, expose it singly to the vengeance of the enemies. Similar observations apply to treaties of commerce.

That the nation may be effectually guarded, it may sometimes be necessary to attack, in order to disconcert measures otherwise injurious, if not fatal. Without looking abroad, the history of France furnishes numerous examples in support of this truth. But it is now impracticable, for an application to the legislature must disclose the design, and would be considered also as an aggression, consequently it would have the evils of such a measure without the advantages. Besides, al-

though a majority of the Assembly might judge the war to be necessary, many of that majority might wish to delay it, that their particular speculations of commerce or finance might be previously arranged ; not to mention the advantages, which a foreign Prince might derive from intrigue and corruption.

Lastly, in the course of a war many leading members of the Assembly may have such an interest in the continuation of hostilities, as to prevent the restoration of peace, though necessary to the kingdom. Thus the King, whose position enables him to discover, and whose interest obliges him to promote the national advantage, is rendered incapable of acting, or at best subservient to others, some of whom must be incapable of judging, and even have an interest opposite to that of their country.

The second article relates to the organization of the military force, which, in all governments, is an object of most serious attention. The idea of a society, each member of which is a soldier, cannot be applied to modern States ; especially to those, whose power is dependent on commerce and the arts. If our fields and shops be abandoned by the manufactures and husbandmen, famine and poverty must inevitably ensue. A part of the society must, therefore, be selected to guard the whole. The experience of all ages has proved, that if this part which forms the army, be not well disciplined, it will oppress the kingdom, but cannot defend it. Vain is the attempt to supply by numbers the want of order and subordination, without which, licentious bands must be alike detested by the people, and despised by their foes. The expense of such an army will increase in proportion to its inutility, and thus the public taxes become a public fraud, seeing that those who contribute have a right to expect from the appropriation of their money the greatest benefit which it can produce.

If, however, with the organization which you have devised, it be practicable to establish a strict discipline, it will remain for you to consider whether your army may not become a dangerous instrument in the hands of its chiefs. If only the

superior grades feel a dependence on the King, they may be induced to second the views of an ambitious General, and it will be easier for them to lead the troops they command against their country, if the officers are named by election, or seniority, than if they are dependent on the King; for it is not even to be hoped, that an army, which has lost respect for its Prince, will long retain it for a popular Assembly. It has been complained of as one of the ancient abuses, that the command of the troops was given almost exclusively to a privileged order.

It resulted from hence, that, actuated like all others by their own interest, they opposed every attempt to change the existent establishments, so that France preserved a greater decree of freedom, than other monarchies; and if the ancient regime had been unexceptionable in other respects, this part would have been eminently useful, for it is certainly wise to interest the army in supporting the constitution. And it is among the advantages of a hereditary monarchy well organized, that numerous and disciplined armies may be maintained without danger to liberty; a thing which in Republics has seldom happened. If ever a design should be formed to subdue France by the arms of Frenchmen, the conspirators must wish for officers without property or connexions, because such men when inured to war will readily follow the standard of him, who can hold out great hopes and expectations; whereas, those who have property of their own, and whose relatives and connexions share in the administration, will not risk the advantages they possess in the great game of revolutions. A resistance, similar to that, which has often irritated you, may on other occasions, and opposed to other efforts, become an impenetrable shield to the liberty of France.

The third article relates to that branch of executive authority, which respects internal affairs. Here it is proper to distinguish between the different duties of administrative bodies. So far as relates to the concerns of a particular department, or district, they are certainly useful, and most certainly they

should be chosen by the people for short periods. A great mass of local knowledge and minute attention will thus be usefully employed, and an honest and industrious administration be probably obtained. But when the execution of the laws, the collection of taxes, and the preservation of order, are committed to such bodies, disappointment may be expected. The people in their choice will naturally prefer men of easy temper, and such as are disposed to gratify their wishes. If, therefore, riots or insurrections should happen, the administrators will not always act with requisite vigor; and as they are not personally affected, by the penury of the public treasury, they will sometimes give way to the solicitations of those, who wish to delay their contributions. Being independent of the King, his Ministers will have but little influence on their conduct; and, of course, cannot be accountable for the consequences. But yet on that conduct everything depends. It is not necessary to mention, what all the world knows, that unless order can be restored the Constitution must perish; but it is proper to give a glance at the finances.

The sum of Assignats, which you have decreed, will ere long be expended, and if the mass be increased, the credit will be diminished, and consequently the value. This resource, then, is almost exhausted in every respect. If the taxes you have laid be not sufficient, or not seasonably collected, a considerable deficit must ensue, and it must fall either upon the interior administration, or the public force, or the creditors of the State. The interior administration must in all cases be supported, since anarchy is the worst of all political evils. It will only, therefore, remain to decide between your creditors, and your troops. If the payments be again suspended, that last stab to public credit will perhaps prove fatal, and a bankruptcy ensue, after the immense sacrifices of every kind to avoid it. If, on the contrary, the army be not paid, it is easy to see the consequences.

The public resentment will in either case, perhaps, be directed against the Ministers, and perhaps against the King.

Such injustice is not uncommon, and might cheerfully be submitted to could it remove the cause of complaint ; but, on the contrary, by increasing the disorder, it will increase the mischief. Let then these important truths be duly considered. Where there is no authority, there can be no accountability. Where the executive power is feeble, anarchy must ensue, and where anarchy long prevails, despotism must succeed ; not indeed in the descendants of your ancient Kings, for they will probably be the earliest victims.

On the fourth article no particular observation will be necessary, but only a general application of those, which have been already made. You will on the whole decide for the French nation, whether the authority given to the King be sufficient to produce that peace and safety to the people, for which alone that, or any other power, ought to be instituted.

Thirdly, of the JUDICIARY. *The judiciary power is delegated to judges, elected by the people for a period.*

It is proper to distinguish between inferior and superior judges. The former may be appointed for a time, because it will be difficult to find proper persons to fill those numerous places ; but it is to be desired, that the superior judges should hold their offices during good behavior, and their salaries also. Those, who are charged with the important duties of administering justice, should, if possible, depend only on God. Their impartiality is of the last importance to every member of society, but principally to the most numerous class, who by that alone can be shielded from oppression. It seems important, also, in every point of view, that they should not be named by popular election.

To make a proper choice of judges, as of other officers, those who choose should have not only a competent idea of the duty to be performed, and of the talents required, but an interest also in making a good choice. Will this be the case in a popular election ? Will not those, who have suits depending, endeavor to get such men named, as will best answer their

purpose? Will not the elections be governed in a great degree by intrigue? Must not the opinion of the voters be in general formed from the information of others? Will not the rich exert themselves to have such judges chosen, as will be instruments of their despotism? And what instrument so dangerous as an iniquitous judge! It is yours to decide, whether this mode gives reasonable ground to hope for proper appointments; and you will consider that to the great mass of French population, the making of the laws will ever be of minor importance, since the needful security of property must confine their wealth within the narrow circle of their wants. But if, in this confined state, their little all be at the mercy of a partial judge, that tranquillity of the soul, which liberty should confer, exists not for them, and that which is to others a blessing, becomes to them a curse. And when their unavoidable dependence on the rich, increased by the influence of such judges, compels them under the pressure of that double weight to re-elect their oppressors, then, humiliated and degraded even in their own eyes by the possession of privileges they cannot exercise, they will find themselves enslaved by the excess of liberty.

Such are the observations, which present themselves on the partition of powers, which you have adopted. Many less matters are not noticed, because it is not intended to criticise your work, but to make a last effort for the happiness of the French. There is one, however, which compels to a painful expression the heart of a father.

You have decreed, '*that females are excluded from the regency.*' Alas, in entrusting the charge of the Constitution to wives and mothers, was it possible to forget that maternal love is the only sentiment, which resists all trials, which occupies the heart of a mother until death, and expires only with her latest breath. Can a mother betray the interests of her child, and are not the interests of this child your own?

It remains only to make some remarks, as to the kind of government, which our situation and our manners would seem

to require. This beautiful country, profusely blest by the munificence of nature, bears on its bosom the means of exhaustless wealth, and presents in the genius of its people a source of infinitely varied enjoyment. Hence she will ever be viewed with cupidity by her neighbors, and be exposed to those interior ills, which wealth cannot fail to produce in the advanced stages of society. France has also been the protector of inferior powers, from the epoch of the revolution in Switzerland and the Netherlands, to that in which she secured the liberty of the new world. She must then have a vigorous internal administration to control the vices inseparably attached to prosperity; and, at the same time, she must possess such naval and military force, and such constitutional activity and decision, that she may protect her possessions, succor her allies, and repress the audacity of her foes.

A high toned monarchy seems, therefore, to be designated as the only government, which may consist with her physical and moral state. And, accordingly, her history, from Charlemagne to the present hour, proves, that her happiness has always been proportioned to the vigor of her administration. Nature, stronger than man, has preserved the monarchy amid the shocks of various revolutions, so that the royalty has remained, though the race of Kings has been changed.

Admitting, then, the necessity whose existence is proved both by reason and experience, it remains to consider by what means freedom can be secured against the power, which time and circumstances will confer on the King, if that office be not abolished in the attempt to establish a government, which consists neither with our manners nor with our situation. And on this occasion, it is proper to rise above the prejudices of the moment, and speak the language of truth to a bewildered nation. They will discover in it the paternal love of a King, which, founded on principles of religion, is beyond the reach of human power, and has resisted the flatteries of a court, and the indignities of a gaol.

Will *numerous* representatives, chosen for a *short* period,

prove a sufficient barrier against royal authority? Where the members are few, the election is more nice, and the competition of candidates presents a greater choice. Hence the individuals, of which such body is composed, will be less liable to deception and seduction. The post being more rare, is thereby more esteemed and sought after, and at the same time more difficult to be obtained or preserved, and hence a greater dependence of the representatives upon the people. A body not numerous is also more under the dominion of reason, and less exposed to the powers of eloquence, and the wanderings of enthusiasm. Persons chosen for a short period, may feel themselves little interested in supporting the privileges, which they must speedily cease to enjoy, and may therefore betray their trust for the attainment of more permanent or more lucrative situations. That ambition, which prompts a factious leader to wrest authority from a weak prince, might render him the slave to one of stronger mind, and accordingly we learn from history, that the same men have been alternately the leaders of a faction and the flatterers of a court.

It seems, therefore, wise to provide for the stability of the Constitution, by the unchanging principles of private interest, and therefore to oppose against the efforts of a hereditary monarch, the resistance of a hereditary Senate, whose members should possess great landed property. Let it not be imagined, that this would restore abuses justly complained of. A patriot King cannot wish to be surrounded by needy dependents, who first deceive and then betray him; who obtain from his bounty the wealth, which they abuse, and by their pernicious art, render even his virtues the scourge of his people. But he may, in a just abhorrence of despotism, desire an institution, which has ever been considered as its most dangerous enemy.

Such a body, if unchecked by a King on the one hand, and by representatives of the people on the other, would doubtless be oppressive. It has already been so in France. The excess of royal authority has in its turn been also injurious; but

the levity, the injustice, and the disorder of a government, merely popular, must be equally subversive of public and private happiness. It is by a just combination of the three, where each having an absolute veto on the others the particular interest of neither can prevail, that the general interest of the whole society will best be known and pursued, and this great nation raised to that station of happiness and glory, which nature seems to have intended.

This form of government has undoubtedly its objections, in common with every other; and since human institutions cannot but partake of the weakness of man, it is in vain that we seek perfection among imperfect beings. In the immense range of affairs, the extremes unite in evil. Reason and happiness are found in a just medium. The wise man stops there, and he who passes farther is lost.

You have heard, gentlemen, the observations which it has always been my design to offer you, when an occasion should present. I have constantly acted with reference to your will, because I have made it my duty to consider you the organs of the will of the nation, and I have ever recognised in the people the right of being governed according to their wishes.

You require of me, gentlemen, and of every public functionary, an oath never to make any change in your constitution. I will take this oath; but I pray you to consider with me for a moment the consequences it involves. My observation is perhaps superficial, and my fears vain; and the hopes of others may be as well founded as they are brilliant. But no one of us is infallible; there is no one but God, who, having foreseen all, can have preordained all. It is at least possible, that the seeds of evil may be concealed in the constitution, and that nothing but time and circumstances may be wanting to cause their development.

If this happens, as there will be no means of changing it, those to whom the people will have confided their interest will have only the sad alternative of violating their oaths on the one hand, or their duty on the other. It is also possible, that a

great majority of the nation may one day be opposed to this form of judgment. Should we not preserve the right of change to this majority? Can we with justice oppose its will? Reflect, gentlemen, on this alternative, and let me urge you to continue your session for a time. Let us together make trial of your work; do not bind yourselves not to change your decrees; for no one is too wise to improve himself in the school of experience. If, after this trial, the Constitution answers your expectations, you will place it with the more confidence in the hands of your successors. If, on the contrary, you find parts of it to be feeble, or ill-adjusted, you will have it in your power to amend them.

But if you still persist in your determination to conclude your task without delay, at least grant the prayer which I make you in behalf of twenty-four millions of Frenchmen, of future generations, nay, of the human race. Deign in mercy to point out the means, by which the people can express their will, without being exposed to the perilous convulsions, which we have so lately experienced.

Whatever may be the result of your deliberations, I repeat to you, gentlemen, that I submit to them unreservedly. Let us then banish all suspicion; it cannot but be injurious to the interests of the empire. I give you my confidence, and I demand yours. Let us then labor in concert for the liberty and prosperity of the French nation.

But that this labor may not be suspected, and may meet with no opposition, I require of you, gentlemen, that you repeal the decree, which prevents me from choosing in the National Assembly the agents of the executive power. I would have it permitted me to nominate, as Ministers of the Constitution, those among you who have shown themselves its most zealous partizans. I would have the choice I shall make obtain your approbation, so that invested with the full force of public opinion, the Ministers may meet no obstacles in the execution of your plan. This appears to me the more proper, inasmuch as to the Ministers will appertain the exercise

of royal power, and as you may naturally wish, that, in giving success to your work, they may show in the most striking manner how much I have been deceived in my opinion. I hope you will perceive, gentlemen, in the request I make to you, an unequivocal proof of the sincerity of my conduct; of that sincerity, which the French have a right to expect from their King, and which for his own honor a King ought ever to exhibit.

MEMOIR

WRITTEN FOR THE KING OF FRANCE, RESPECTING THE
NEW CONSTITUTION.

On the original manuscript is the following endorsement, in the handwriting of Mr Morris;—‘Memoir given to M. de Montmorin on the 31st of August, 1791. He gave it to the King after the step was taken, which this Memoir was to influence. The King returned it with a request to have a translation.’ The King took the oath to accept and maintain the constitution on the 14th of September.

In the present posture of affairs what is the King to do?

This question is important, and, to decide it properly, three things are necessary. First, a retrospect of the past; secondly, an examination of the present; and thirdly, a rational investigation of the future.

It may be said, in general, that few Kings have shown a more tender regard for their subjects; and an eloquent discourse might be made, in which some striking incidents of the present reign might be placed in a strong light, but this would be attended with inconveniences. There is little dignity in praising one’s self, and still less in begging future favor on the score of past kindness. Men in general are not very grateful

for benefits bestowed on themselves, and no one thinks himself bound, in his own particular, to return good offices performed for a whole nation. All agree in considering the good done as so much gained, and in looking forward for as much more as they can contrive to obtain. A discourse of this sort, therefore, would be attended with no profound effect. The fine phrases in it would be applauded, and at the next moment the speaker might be insulted. Such things have already happened.

In reviewing the past, therefore, we must not seek for occasions or means to make his Majesty applaud himself. Still less should he beg the poor pittance of gratitude at the hands of the ungrateful. But it is important for him to show that he has acted consistently. And yet this should be accomplished in such manner, as to produce the effect without appearing to intend it; because such appearance would place him in the situation of one, who defends himself before his judges, and a King should never forget that he is accountable only to God. It is a general fault in his discourses, since the States-General were first convened, that too great court is paid to popularity. The consequence of such proceeding is, that the monarch purchases momentary favor *for his Ministers*, at the expense of royal authority. The people revere only those who show superiority without contempt, and that calm wisdom which their breath can neither reach nor ruffle.

To render a short view of the past in some degree useful, it may be proper to show what the King might have done at particular periods. For instance, when he determined to convoke the States-General, he might have given to the kingdom such a Constitution as he pleased; and if he had chosen a tolerable form of government, those who now exclaim against all monarchic power, would have raised statues to Louis the Sixteenth. But, by the manner of convoking the States, some questions were left undecided, which necessarily tended to create dissension; and from thence must have resulted, as a necessary consequence, one of two things; either that royal

authority would preserve sufficient force to decide the question during the contest, in which case (if that authority was exercised) one of the parties would be thrown into opposition, so as to obstruct the good intentions of the King; or else, that the royal authority not having sufficient force, one of the parties would overpower the other, in which case a future scene of violence must succeed, and suspicions arise tending to multiply those acts of injustice, which ever attend the steps of a predominant faction. These things ought to have been foreseen, because in such circumstances they are inevitable, and nothing is so vain as the expectation to allay the heats of party, by sprinkling on them a few soft sentences or pretty phrases.

When the States-General were assembled, the King might still, by his speech at the opening, have given them whatever form he pleased; and it is the more surprising, that this opportunity was neglected, as the many discussions of every kind, which had taken place on that subject, ought to have pointed out the evil, and led to the best remedy which remained. This measure would have been attended, however, with the first inconvenience above mentioned. Possibly it was with a view to avoid such inconvenience, that it was thought prudent to wait until the strength of the parties should be fairly tried, and then to join the strongest. But the mischiefs resulting from such a line of conduct were self-evident. First, it contains an acknowledgment of weakness, and that, in matters dependent on public opinion, always creates the thing which it confesses. Secondly, it contains a proof of bad faith, and of course precludes the hope of zealous assistance from anybody. And thirdly, it must prevent the royal authority from being brought into action, until that action should be evidently useless; and consequently the King could not command the party which he might join, under such auspices, but they would command him. Whatever might have been the reason for neglecting to organize the States-General on that day, this at least is certain, that such neglect showed timidity, and of

course invited the danger which it feared, for this also is inevitable in matters dependent on opinion.

The *Séance Royale* of June 1789 was held too late. The force, which might have been crushed before it appeared dangerous, was then too great for the power which attempted to oppose it. The subsequent measures showed an ignorance of the actual state of things, which, though great, is more pardonable than is now imagined, because an intimate knowledge of man, and of the nature of his existence, in the approach towards freedom, are necessary to decide on all the energies of human character, and on the effects which result from a sudden display of its powers. But, although the cause of those counsels by which his majesty was swayed at that time, may be overlooked, the consequences can never be forgotten. The Assembly acquired thereby the reputation of courage, consistency, and power, and of course became master of the empire.

Here commenced a new epoch. Men acquainted with the violence of popular assemblies, could not doubt that they would arrogate to themselves all power. Resistance was evidently ineffectual, and of course must have the consequence of increasing their power, and inflaming their wrath. And since an attempt to reject their decrees must, in the nature of things, be unsuccessful, it only remained to choose one, of two things, either to accept the decrees in silence, or to make suitable remarks. Had a clear view been obtained, of those events which were unavoidable, the choice would perhaps have been different from what it was. These events are, first, the assumption of all power by the Assembly, and consequent abuse of it. Secondly, corrupt and unjust conduct on their part. Thirdly, the relaxation of order, and of course the introduction of anarchy. Lastly, as the necessary result of these, a thorough contempt of the Assembly among all ranks and degrees of men.

To provide beforehand the means of profiting by these events, such observations should have been delivered on each decree, such explanations given of its tendency, and such pre-

diction made of its consequences, that when the Assembly should have reached that point of disrespect, at which they could not but arrive, the simple repetition, in a methodical manner, of what had been already said, would convince the nation that their King was both wiser and better than their representatives. This conviction would naturally lead them to restore his authority. A different determination, however, was adopted, which had always this inconvenience in it, that when his Majesty should find it necessary to reject the *whole* work he had previously adopted in detail, he would not be able to preserve that frankness and nobleness of character, which he might have done, had he given the reasons for his dissent to each *part* of that work. Still, however, he had it in his power to show, when a proper occasion might offer, that he had acted only under the influence of a controlling necessity, and been in fact a passive instrument in the hands of the Assembly. But his speech to that body in February, 1790, deprived him of this last advantage, at least in a considerable degree, and it forms at this moment the most disagreeable circumstance in the whole of his conduct.

In the month of June last, the Assembly had approached very near to that period which they must reach, and as far as it is possible to decide where there is no absolute evidence, the chance is, that, by the present day, the royal authority would have been considerably exalted on their ruins, if the King had not taken the ill-advised step which he did. This step could not eventuate well; for in the supposition that he had reached Montmedy, or any other place *in the kingdom*, he would still have been brought back, unless he had sufficient force to protect himself, and the question as to that point must have depended upon the event of a civil war. If he had gone *out of the kingdom*, the same situation would have occurred.

Nothing, therefore, but the favorable event of a bloody contest could reinstate him, and there is every reason to believe that the event would have been unfavorable. First, the kingdom would have been united in opposition, and the conquest

of France is, perhaps, beyond the strength of all Europe combined. Secondly, the feebleness of the constitution would have been instantly remedied, by general consent, from a general conviction of the necessity. Thirdly, the bankruptcy, which is now perhaps unavoidable, would have been charged to the King, as arising from his flight, and subsequent hostility. Fourthly, by confiscations a considerable addition would have been obtained to the stock of public lands, so as to alleviate the taxes, which by means of the bankruptcy would be less heavy than before. And, fifthly, since in the course of the contest, discipline must have been established in the army, it is more than probable, that foreign powers would have been obliged to acknowledge such form of government as the National Assembly might have adopted. The best thing, therefore, which could have happened, is that which actually did happen; and the proof of what is said above, respecting the events which would have taken place if his Majesty had remained quietly at home, exists in the present state of things, after he had, by his departure, done so much to increase the power of his enemies.

Being now at the second subject of contemplation, viz. the present state of things, it is proper, if possible, to look at them with the same calmness, that posterity will enjoy in making the same examination. This is one requisite quality in the character of a statesman.

The members of the Assembly begin to feel the inevitable consequences, which follow from the want of wisdom and virtue. To gratify the little interest, or pitiful vanity, or base fear of the moment, the leaders have urged forward measures which they could not but know were pernicious. As to the great herd, they must, in every such Assembly, be profoundly ignorant of the business they are engaged in; and although there is not a *petit maitre* among them, who would employ a shoemaker that had not long worked at his trade, each has the unaccountable pretension to be, without any sort of experi-

ence, an able legislator and profound politician ; as if it were an easier thing to make a constitution than a pair of shoes.

The great bulk of the people have already signified their impatience, that the session of the Assembly has continued so long ; and although very few of their acts failed to produce applause at the moment, from some quarter or other, there is in regard to the whole constitution a solemn silence. The parts were fitted to the fashion of the day, and that fashion has changed. No man approves. And no man of understanding can approve. The rich tremble, and there is throughout all ranks a vast anxiety. How will this end, is the general question ; and it proves a general conviction that the constitution is not the end.

The paper money, whose depreciation has long been sensible in the greater circle of commerce, begins now to be felt in those smaller concerns which interest the poor. The price of bread rises, because the produce of the earth cannot remain cheap, while all other articles grow dear. Every day the number of those who feel the necessity of providing against this evil increases ; and their efforts, by showing more clearly its nature and extent, accelerate its progress. Hence the inquiry grows general, Where are the blessings promised by the revolution ? Why are we not in the enjoyment of them ? With whom lies the fault ? Is it with the King ? Is it with the Assembly ? Is it with the emigrants ? The nation begins to cry out like a sick savage, ‘ I suffer ; what ails me ? Who has put the pain in me which I feel ? ’ The next question will be, ‘ How am I to get it out ? ’

The situation of the colonies affects deeply the commercial interests of the kingdom, while at the same moment commercial property melts away from the powerful operation of paper money. These things give awful notice to the mercantile cities, that all is not well. The licentious conduct of the army, notwithstanding the attempts to conceal it, excites alarm rather than indignation ; which is worthy of remark, because it proves a general sense of weakness and general apprehension of dan-

ger. The situation of the Finances is deplorable, and produces also its effect, though not yet in full force. The flattering prospect of restoring an equality between the receipts and expenditures vanishes. The absurdity of establishing order in this department, by introducing disorder into every other, becomes evident; and it is possible, by tearing away the thin veil with which it is at present covered, to make a very deep impression. By striking forcibly at the centre, a shock may be given at the remotest extremities of the empire; and as the evil is inevitable, the stroke is sure.

These circumstances mark a moment, in which the public mind is open to new impressions; and it is of vast consequence to make such impressions as will tend to produce good, and avoid a part of the impending evil. But this leads to the third point of consideration.

A full and complete view of the future course of things would generally lead to a wise conduct. But such knowledge cannot be obtained by man. All that he can do is to form rational conjecture. And for this purpose he must divest himself, as much as possible, both of hope and fear.

It seems to be evident, that the measures taken for securing a peaceable and orderly administration of justice and police are greatly inadequate. Hence violence and injustice must continue to prevail. And as the administration is both expensive and ineffectual, there is in that alone sufficient cause to ruin the finances, were they otherwise in good condition. But if the administration were most vigorous, still a circulation of the immense sum of twelve hundred millions in paper money, would inevitably produce disorder. The effects of such money are, first, a loss of value as to exterior commerce and connexion. Secondly, a similar loss in respect to all manufactures depending in any degree on raw materials of foreign growth. Thirdly, from the combined effect of these two losses results a loss of value, in regard to other manufactures. Fourthly, a rise in the price of the necessaries of life becomes at last inevitable, because the husbandman, in exchanging the

things he has for those he wants, by the intervention of money, must of course raise the price of the one, in proportion to the price of the other.

Besides, it must be remarked, that as the value of paper money is dependent on opinion, every event, which affects public opinion, must accelerate the progress of depreciation. Moreover, the expenses of government arise in a great measure from the purchase of different commodities. It follows, therefore, that such expense must be increased as the value of the money diminishes. And since the same diminution forms a reason with every citizen not to sell an object of intrinsic value, until the moment when he wants the money, it becomes his interest to delay the payment of his taxes to the last moment, so as to obtain the highest price for his commodities. Consequently, in proportion as the wants of government increase, its means must diminish. The increase of the price of every article will give to each citizen, who is held to the payment of a fixed sum, and whose means of payment are derived from the produce of the earth, a balance in money which he will perceive to be of little use; and as he will regret the sale of his goods for such money, which grows worse every day, he will of course hold back from the market his remaining merchandize.

On the other hand, all those who are in the receipt of fixed sums, being obliged to economize, by reason of the decreased value of their income, a great number of persons, whom they formerly employed, must remain idle. The heads of manufactories also, who are in the habit of selling on long credit, will at each payment suffer considerable loss, and that must incapacitate them from continuing their operations, whereby a number of workmen will be thrown out of employ. The cities and towns will, from the operation of these causes, be burdened with a great number of people, and at the same time straitened in subsistence. Then will arise a cry against those, who monopolize grain; attempts will be made to regulate the price of bread, and a train of popular excesses will succeed, all tending to increase the evil from which they arise.

This is the probable state resulting merely from a paper currency, but there are other, and abundant sources of evil. While the government possesses a sufficiency of this paper, it is easy to preserve an appearance of paying the public creditors, although in fact they receive but three quarters of their due, but as soon as the paper is all gone abroad, and can be brought back only by the effect of taxation, and when that effect, dependent at best on a feeble and disjointed administration, is weakened by the causes already pointed out, it will become indispensably necessary to suspend again the payments, and this will be the more pernicious, as the abundance of paper money, and its consequent loss of value, destroy all private credit, and thus increase in every way the suffering of those who are deprived of their due. This will also affect the mercantile credit of the whole kingdom, and thus it is probable, that about the time when the revolt of the colonies begins to be severely felt on the seacoast, the capital will be convulsed by a general bankruptcy.

Such a state of things would naturally excite commotion in the army, whatever might be the state of its discipline; but an army already familiarized to revolt, dissolute, debauched, and rapacious, will probably make the people feel, long before that period, the direful effects of military oppression. Whether these various miseries will all arrive, and whether they will take place at the same moment, or only in succession, cannot be decided with precision, but it seems to be inevitable that, from some or all of these causes, an opportunity will present itself, in which the King will be able to act as he pleases, if he shall be possessed of the public confidence. But if he does not possess it, he may be the victim of follies, which others have committed.

Here then recurs again the question; What is the King to do? And with it, a partial answer offers. Let him take such steps now, as will obtain and secure the public confidence hereafter. But how? Shall he reject the constitution? No; for then he would be charged with all the future evils, as

resulting from that rejection. Shall he then accept it in the same silence, with which he has received the different parts? No; for then it will be impossible to convince the world, that he acts with good faith, because he has already declared his conviction, though in general terms, that the constitution is bad. Shall he then acknowledge that he has been deceived, and finds it now to be a good constitution? No; for this would be false, and, therefore, in all cases unjustifiable. Besides, it would make him in some sort responsible for events, which he ought in all cases to avoid. Shall he then repeat, in general terms, that he finds the constitution bad, but yet accepts and swears to maintain it? No; for this will involve an appearance of falsehood, meanness, and contradiction. What then shall he do?

Circumstances seem to point out his conduct with a decisive force. He ought to accept, assigning as a reason therefor, the mischiefs which would inevitably follow from his refusal; and he should remark at the same time, that the omnipotence of the Assembly, and the deserted state to which he is reduced, leave him no alternative. He may even infer, from a modest doubt of his own judgment, and the decided adherence of the nation to the Assembly, that it is his duty to submit to the public will so strongly pronounced. This idea, contrasted with their self-sufficiency, will, at a future period, when his opinions are justified by events, work strongly in his favor.

On the constitution itself he is bound, by the strongest ties of duty and interest, to make clear and pointed observations. It is a duty to himself, because he will thereby justify his departure in June last, though he had in February, 1790, declared his antecedent adherence; for he will be able to show, that the constitution is so bad, that he ought not to adopt it, unless in the last necessity. It is a duty to his subjects, because it must occasion their misery, and therefore he ought to show, that such is the unavoidable consequence of a form of civil polity so crude and monstrous; and, indeed, all his obser-

vations should be raised on that single basis, for which purpose he should introduce them, by declaring that the government ought to be calculated merely for the benefit of the people. Lastly, it is a duty to God. It is to his high Tribunal, that the monarchs of the earth must render a solemn account of their conduct ; and he requires of them, that it be regulated by the principles of truth and justice, which alone endure forever, and which forever establish the peace and prosperity of empires.

His Majesty's observations should be powerful, clear, and convincing. A weak blow recoils, but a strong one penetrates. The present is a decisive moment in his fate. He must conquer or perish. If he does not mark his disapprobation, he is disgraced ; and if he shows it faintly and weakly, he is ruined. Every kind of intrigue will doubtless be set on foot to induce him to be sparing in his censure. The reason is clear. The friends of the several members of the Assembly fear their disgrace ; and they know, that, if they can avoid the stroke of the moment, time and circumstances will enable them to recover their influence. Already they agree in blaming the constitution in general terms, but if you descend to particulars, each will defend the most blameable parts, and censure only some light and trivial things, which he happened to oppose. Each one, therefore, labors to obtain the royal sanction to his particular opinions, and the only reward which the King and his counsellors will obtain from their generosity, will, as heretofore, be a momentary applause bestowed on the composition of his speech, and in the next half hour, pointed ridicule for being the dupes to superior address.

It must be remembered, that the Assembly will soon be dissolved, and nobody will then be accountable for their misconduct, even at the bar of public opinion. But the King remains ; and unless human nature is greatly changed, he has no method of acquiring the favor of the next Assembly so certain, as that of blaming the present, because by this means he provides for them an excuse beforehand, for the evils which

must arise under their administration. And he ought also to provide beforehand against the attempts, which they may make to destroy his authority. Above all things, it is important for him, that when any misfortune arises, the people may say, '*this is what our King has warned us of, not in vague and indefinite terms, but clearly and pointedly. Happy would it have been for us, had we put our trust in him, instead of an Assembly, which has plundered him and ruined us.*' It is proper also for his Majesty, after pointing out, in the most forcible manner which the needful brevity will admit of, the manifold vices of the constitution, to state the general outlines of a better, and that in such way as to secure the support of men of wealth and influence. By this means he will obtain the suffrage of the enlightened part of Europe, and that will have great weight with the vanity of this nation.

In the course of the events which follow, should he pursue the steps now pointed out, a favorable opportunity will offer to effect the great good of the nation, although it is impossible exactly to show that opportunity now, with all its incidental circumstances, each of which will not fail to influence the conduct of the moment. But if he shall have conciliated the good opinion of the nation, which can alone be secured by the general persuasion of his wisdom and virtue, many things now deemed impossible will then appear easy.

A number of little accessory measures are purposely omitted in this place, but one great means is to require the abolition of the decree, prohibiting a choice of Ministers among the members of the Assembly; and in all cases to choose Ministers remarkable for their attachment to the constitution. And should the next Assembly find it necessary, as they certainly will, to invade that constitution, he ought to exercise his veto, assigning as a reason that he will not violate his oath. At length, when the various evils shall be so accumulated, that the business can no longer go on, it is not impossible that the Assembly, acknowledging their own incapacity as arising from the state in which they are now placed, may themselves confer a dictatorial power on the King.

If nothing of this sort should happen, a moment may arrive, in which the King may proclaim a new constitution, and call on the people to proceed to the elections under it, if they approve; and should the day of election be near at hand, and the time for deliberation short, (a thing which necessity would justify,) the example of Paris in electing would be followed throughout the kingdom, and a change be thereby effected. The conduct of Paris might be influenced by a single circumstance, viz. a suspension of the payments, and a view of restoring the public credit by a more vigorous government. Various other modes of changing the constitution might be mentioned, but as has already been observed, the proper measures to be pursued must be pointed out by the circumstances of the moment. All, which man can properly do, is to fix his object, and then steadily pursue it, in consistence with the everlasting rules of justice, and according to the situation in which he is placed.

LETTER

TO COUNT DE MONTMORIN, ON PROVIDING SUBSISTENCE FOR
PARIS.

Translation.

September 21st, 1791.

It appears to me very evident, M. le Comte, that next spring there will be a want of bread in Paris, if, indeed, famine should not be experienced before that time, either by the scarcity of grain, or the abundance of Assignats. Would it not then be well to take the proper measures now to secure a supply of flour? For the sum of three millions you might import from America to Paris, all charges included, about twelve million pounds of flour, which would enable you to make a dai-

ly distribution of two hundred thousand pounds of bread, during the space of two months.

You should not conceal from yourself, that when famine makes its appearance, it will no longer be possible to control the people, and you have already seen to what excesses they may be carried. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance, that the King should procure the means of taking advantage of a circumstance, which might be dangerous to him, if not prepared for beforehand. I think it would be well to give the bread to the poor, and let the price advance to others, as far as it will.

Here, in a few words, is the mode of operation. Let the King fix upon any sum whatever, which shall be deposited at London, in the hands of persons whom I will point out. Then I will give orders to have the amount invested in flour, to have it shipped to Falmouth, and there wait ulterior orders. This flour will begin to arrive four or five months hence, and, if then wanted at Paris, it can be shipped to Havre; but if, on the other hand, and contrary to all expectation, there should be an abundance in Paris, then it shall be sent to the markets, which offer the best opening in Europe, and in that case it is to be believed that it will sell without loss.

It may happen, that the next legislature may decide on making retrenchments, and, among other things, may wish to do so in the civil list; but they will not dare to touch it, when they know that the King has made such use of it as is proposed. In fine, the object which I suggest to you is a great affair of state, and not of money or of commerce. I do not wish to gain anything by it, nor shall I gain anything. I have no other desire, than that of being useful to persons whose misfortunes I respect.

LETTER
TO THE KING OF FRANCE.

Translation.

Paris, September 24th, 1791.

Sire,

I had the honor to present to your Majesty yesterday, through Monsieur de Montmorin, a translation of the memoir, which I had sent to him the last of August. This memoir was made before your Majesty had decided what part to take. It contains, therefore, some rather strong expressions. I have thought it my duty, however, not to change anything in it, for if I sometimes appear harsh, I am always sincere.

You will find annexed hereto, Sire, a note entrusted, on the twenty-sixth of January, 1790, to a person, who was to deliver it into the hands of the Queen.* I know not whether her Majesty received it, but I submit it to you now, to show that I have always been desirous of being useful to you, and also that my predictions were not made after the results.

I have this day written a letter to Monsieur de Montmorin, upon the supplying of Paris with provisions, to which I beg your Majesty's attention. It is by the people of this city, that both the revolution and the constitution have been made. They will always control everything, while the National Assemblies hold their sessions here, at least until your Majesty can resume your authority. It costs too much to buy the deputies, and serves no purpose, since they are only instruments in the hands of the people. Besides, they have too little stability, and even fidelity, to be worth the trouble of buying them. If your Majesty should succeed in getting even three quarters of them, they would not dare to do anything against

*See this note above, p. 472.

the will of the populace, and it is much easier to secure the populace.

On another occasion, I had the honor of remarking to your Majesty, that 'Men are governed only by force or by opinion, and even that force depends only upon opinion. Thus the only difference between absolute and moderate governments, is an opinion more or less general. In an absolute government, everything depends upon the army, and in the other, on the mass of good citizens, who are called the *people*. When there is no longer a government, there is no longer a people. It is then the populace that governs, because it is that, which, having nothing to lose, hopes to gain everything, and which, thus becoming the only active force, alone inspires terror.' Many modes present themselves of securing not only the populace, but the people also. I confine myself at this moment to that of giving them bread, and that in a manner to show not only the goodness, but also the wisdom and foresight of your Majesty. Then your favors will convey to them the idea both of munificence and of grandeur, and this last has a powerful effect upon the French nation. It rarely thinks of the good, but is always in extacies with the beautiful.

At all events, Sire, I must insist, for your Majesty's interest, upon the most profound secrecy, because if it were known, that your Majesty had this object in view, it would be declared, that it was to corrupt the people; but when want shall appear, every one will be persuaded that it was to help them. Then the wickedness of your enemies, instead of being dangerous, will be only contemptible. On the other hand, if your Majesty does not see fit to countenance the affair, it will be expedient to appear to know nothing about it, because the people always suppose, that, if the evil is foreseen, it may be avoided.

DRAFT

OF A MANIFESTO TO BE MADE BY THE KING OF FRANCE,
LATE MONSIEUR.

Translation.

This Paper was written in July, 1795, and consequently a few weeks after the death of the young Dauphin, called Louis the Seventeenth. On this event, *Monsieur*, eldest brother of Louis the Sixteenth, assumed the title of King, under the name of Louis the Eighteenth. At whose request this MANIFESTO was drawn up, or with what particular design, there is no means of determining by any written explanation discovered among Mr Morris's papers. He was at this time in England.

A melancholy event calls us to the throne of our ancestors, and the unhappy state of the kingdom appears to us to demand the public declaration of our sentiments.

Throughout the long struggle of the factions, which have distracted France, we have everywhere seen errors and faults. We have already forgotten them, and we invite all our subjects to the same forgetfulness, that they may mutually forgive their mutual injuries.

We invite you, Frenchmen, to co-operate with us for the safety of our country. Let us congratulate ourselves upon the splendid courage, which has caused France to be respected, notwithstanding the crimes of those, who had usurped the control; and that the union of all Frenchmen gives us at length the happy assurance, that this courage will no longer be displayed under the standard of despotism. Behold the space, which you have traversed in passing from misfortune to misfortune, and contrast your former condition with your present state. For the last six years nothing has been done, but to propose new systems of government, in the vain hope of obtaining that happiness, which has been left far behind. Its

semblance has been pursued, only to embrace its shadow. An attempt to re-establish credit has ended in bankruptcy. Pursuing liberty, we have found slavery. We flattered ourselves with the expectation of abundance, and are plunged into want. We sought to correct abuses, and, alas, nothing but abuses remain.

Is there in fact a single man, who can show a legitimate commission from the French people to exercise any authority whatever? And yet it is in the name of the people, that France is oppressed. Let us unite, then, to put an end to this long and ruinous abuse. The King acknowledges for good and loyal Frenchmen, only those, who are willing to co-operate for the happiness of the kingdom, and knows no enemies except those who oppose it, except those who seek to prolong anarchy under whatsoever name, those, finally, who seek to overreach their fellow citizen.

The wishes of the nation are known to us, notwithstanding the endeavors which have been made to stifle its voice, and already have Frenchmen from all parts expressed to us their wishes for the re-establishment of Monarchy, the only means of restoring order and plenty. We accomplish their desires by investing ourself with the authority, which belongs to our birth, and we display the standard of France, under which may rally all those who wish to enjoy peace, tranquillity, and liberty; that true and real liberty, which consists in protection extended to citizens by wise laws, vigorously executed, not that ideal, metaphysical liberty, which has caused the blood of Frenchmen to flow under the axe of tyrants, which has filled the prisons with innocent victims, which, under the sanction of law, has massacred whole families, which has carried fire and sword into its peaceable provinces, and whose savage fury spared not even new born infants. Such is the result of opinions, whose supporters even are now compelled to proclaim their absurdity; such are the consequences of an imaginary equality, which has covered with mourning countries formerly the most happy. Return then, Frenchmen, to true principles;

return to your former character, to your former enjoyments. Let your King at length console himself for all his troubles, by the happiness of his people, and by concerting with them measures to make it permanent.

There are criminals, whose crimes are so enormous, that the interest of nations requires their punishment, but the heart of the King recoils from vengeance, and he desires conciliation rather than punishment.

In accordance with his paternal feelings, and in order to prevent premature commotions, the King forbids each and all to declare themselves openly in his favor, until the moment shall arrive when this declaration can be made without too great hazard. He also forbids this to those, who are in the army, and who, if their sentiments were suspected, would infallibly be removed from the places where there zeal will be most useful.

It is possible that those, who have gained possession of the superior power, may still wish to control the national will; that they may oppose us with troops; and that, like our ancestor, Henry the Fourth, of glorious memory, we may be obliged to fight, to break the yoke under which France has so long groaned. Perhaps these sanguinary chiefs may wish to deliver to severe punishments those Frenchmen, who shall take up arms to defend the people and the King. It will be one of the greatest misfortunes, should retaliation be necessary to repress such barbarity, but we will perform all our duty. This is our solemn pledge, and whatever be the lot, which attends us, never, either in misfortune or prosperity, will we depart from the engagements, which we have thus assumed.









